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AN INTRODUCTION TO INDIAN CHURCH HISTORY

BY

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

I have tried in this book to trace the outline of Indian Church History from the beginning down to the present time. In any such attempt the great number of Missions that come on the scene in the modern period, from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards, presents a major difficulty. It would obviously be impossible in a book of this size to take them one by one and say something about each. Similarly to take all the regions of India and try to summarize the Christian history of each would require too many pages. The only course remaining open would seem to be to take certain topics and make these the subject, using material from the individual mission histories for illustration. This is what I have tried to do in chapters IX, XI, XII, XIV and XV. It seemed the only feasible method; but I am conscious that it leaves many gaps, and I fear that many readers will feel disappointed when they find some subject in which they have a special interest barely alluded to, or perhaps not mentioned at all. To such readers I can only offer an apology. There is need of a book which concentrates on the modern period and has room for a less inadequate treatment of its immense variety.

I am very grateful to the Rev. E. L. Wenger, the Rev. C. Devasahayam and the Rev. W. Stewart, who read the book in typescript and made comments and criticisms which enabled me to remove not a few blemishes, and to Miss Hazel Mickleburgh, who very kindly drew the maps.

Tumkur
29th February, 1960

C. B FIRTH

FOREWORD

In writing this foreword my main purpose is to express my gratitude to the Rev. C. B. Firth for contributing this volume to the C.S.L. For a long time we have been asking for a brief history of the Christian Church in India and this book meets the need in an admirable way.

Mr. Firth has not only taught the subject in his seminary but has done a great deal of careful study in the field of Indian Church History and in this book he shares some of the fruit of his study. It is not easy to bring out in a small volume like this all that one might want to know about the growth of every section of the Church in India. But this book does help the reader to understand the main streams of the history of the Indian Church.

Some readers may feel that comparatively more space has been given to the history of the Syrian Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Churches than to the work of the Protestant Missions. I think, this will serve as a corrective to the ignorance of people about the non-protestant missions. Certainly it is important that more should be known about the work of the Protestant missions also. But no single volume can uniformly deal with all the missions. We need more books on the subject. It is hoped that this book itself will inspire the writing of other books, particularly on the contribution of the Protestant missions for the growth of the Church in India. We also need similar books on the history of the Church in other Asian countries.

Let me also commend this book for translation into many Asian languages.

Bangalore
February, 1961.

J. R. CHANDRAN
(*General Editor*)

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Chapter I

THE TRADITION OF ST THOMAS

The Christian Church, as distinct from the Old Israel, arose out of the events described in the central portion of the Apostles' Creed, that is to say, the birth, passion and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. These happened in the small country of Palestine on the south-eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea in the first century A.D., and the history of the Church is the story of their consequences throughout the world. It was as if a rock had been flung into a pool of water, causing first a great splash at the place where it fell and then a series of waves spreading out in all directions in widening circles. So the effects of the birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension of our Lord spread outwards from Palestine through the work of his apostles, their helpers and successors, who planted the Church in country after country, until it had penetrated into all five continents.

The expansion of which we read in the New Testament and in most Church History books is that which took place in the Roman Empire, that is in the lands surrounding the Mediterranean Sea. There, chiefly through the labours of St Paul and his companions,—though not through them alone—, the Church spread in a wonderfully short time through Asia Minor, Macedonia and Greece. Through others it reached Antioch, Alexandria and Rome itself. It continued to spread after the death of the apostles to every province of the Empire, encountering from time to time the hostility of the populace or of the government and enduring fearful times of persecution, until in the fourth century the emperors themselves became Christians and made Christianity the established religion of the Empire.

Thereafter different lines of development began to appear, partly because of differences of race, language and politics, partly because of differences in theology. On the one hand there was the Latin-speaking Church of the western half of the Empire, with Rome as its centre and the Pope as its chief *guru*. This Church, as centuries passed, won the barbarian peoples of western and northern Europe to Christianity, and (much later) gave the Faith to America; but in the course of history it

first became estranged from the Church of the eastern Empire and then split up into Roman Catholics and Protestants in the sixteenth century. On the other hand there was the Greek-speaking Church of the eastern half of the Empire. It had its early centres at Antioch and Alexandria, presided over by their Patriarchs, but later became based on Constantinople, the capital of the eastern Roman Empire. There it was ruled by the Emperor as well as the Patriarch of that city. In time it became separated from the Church of the west. It is commonly known as the Greek or the Orthodox or the Byzantine Church. This Church in the ninth and tenth centuries brought the barbarian nations of south-eastern Europe and Russia to Christianity; but before then it had lost most of the Christians of Egypt and Syria, in the fifth and sixth centuries through theological disagreements and in the seventh century through invasion and conquest by the Mohammedan Arabs as well. The predominant Churches in those countries, speaking Coptic in Egypt and Syriac in Syria, and known as Monophysite, became separated from the Orthodox Church.

But besides these lines of development within the Roman Empire there were other lines of expansion outside the Empire southwards and eastwards. From Alexandria the Church spread to Ethiopia in the continent of Africa. Through Antioch and West Syria it spread to East Syria, and took root in the land between the rivers Euphrates and Tigris which we call Mesopotamia and its modern inhabitants call Iraq. This was border country between the Roman Empire and the Persian, and it fairly soon passed into the possession of the Persians, at whose hands the Christians had to endure terrible persecutions. Largely because of this political difference, but also because of theology, the Church in the Persian dominions became separated from Christians further west in the fifth century, and thereafter lived a life of its own. It is known as the Nestorian Church, and in its early days it had a great record of missionary enterprise not only in the parts of Persia east of Mesopotamia, but throughout Asia, even as far as China. Because of the conquests of Muslim Arabs and Turks and other peoples of Central Asia most of the churches planted by the Nestorians have perished, the Nestorian Church itself has almost disappeared, and the story of the eastern expansion of Christianity is very little known.

It was one of the early eastward movements that first brought Christianity to India. According to tradition it was brought in

the first century by one of the twelve apostles, St Thomas. This has been the constant tradition of the Syrian Christians of Malabar, and it has been widely believed in the West also that this apostle's sphere of work was in India. Unfortunately, however, we have no contemporary records to establish the matter beyond doubt. We know of St Thomas from the Gospels, which are books written in the century in which he lived by men among whom the memory of the Twelve was fresh, some of whom may well have known him personally. They do not tell us much about him; but they do at least supply us with firm contemporary evidence that there really was such a person, and that he was one of those chosen by our Lord as his apostles, and they shew us two or three glimpses of his personality. Of his mission to India on the other hand we have no similar record dating from his own life-time. No book or inscription or monument of the first century or even of the second remains to tell us of this; it is not until the third century that the ancient Christian writers begin to mention it, and even then they give no more than slight allusions, never a full account. Consequently there is much uncertainty about the actual history of St Thomas, and it is necessary to inquire what grounds there are for believing that he came to India and founded the Church here.

It will be convenient to state first the Syrian Christian tradition, and then to see what early Christian writers have to say about the activities of St Thomas and the origins of Christianity in India. The tradition current among the Syrians is as follows.[1] St Thomas, after visiting Socotra (an island in the Arabian Sea off the north-east coast of Africa), landed at Cranganore (Kodangalūru), on the Periyar estuary north of Cochin, in about 52 A.D. He is said to have preached to the Jewish colony settled there and to have made converts both among them and among their neighbours. Travelling in the coastal region southwards he founded churches in seven places, Maliankara (near Cranganore), Palayur, Parur, Gokamangalam, Niranam, Chayal and Quilon, in four of which places Syrian churches still exist.[2] He is further said to have ordained presbyters for the churches from four Brahmin families called Sankarapuri, Pakalomattam, Kalli and Kaliankal. After this he is said to have crossed over

[1] See for example E. M. Philip: *The Indian Church of St Thomas*, pp. 15-16.

[2] For the local tradition of Palayur see Philip, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-22.

to the east coast and to have travelled eastwards from there to Malacca and even to China, and finally to have returned to Mylapore, now part of the city of Madras (which did not exist in the first century). Here his preaching aroused the hostility of the Brahmins, who raised a riot against him, during which he was speared to death. The year of his martyrdom is said to have been about 72 A.D.

This was the tradition found among the Christians of Malabar by the Portuguese, when they arrived and settled in India in the sixteenth century. It must, of course, have been current long before then; but the Portuguese accounts of what they were told seem to be the earliest literary form of the Indian tradition now surviving.[1]

Some two hundred years earlier the Venetian traveller Marco Polo, who was in South India in 1288 and again in 1292, was shown 'at a certain little town', which he does not name, a tomb reputed to be that of St Thomas; it was then a place of pilgrimage for both Christians and Mohammedans. It is usually supposed that the 'little town' was Mylapore. At any rate it was there that certain Portuguese in 1517, who had come across an old chapel carved with crosses, were told by a Mohammedan that it was built over the place where St Thomas was buried. Other European travellers who visited South India in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries[2] refer to a church of St Thomas, and one of them, Nicolo de Conti, locates it at 'Malpuria, a maritime city situated in the second gulf beyond India' (i.e. the Bay of Bengal). But the earliest witness from India to a shrine of St Thomas in this country is a certain Theodore in the sixth century, who told Gregory, Bishop of Tours (in France), of a monastery and a fine church in that part of India where the saint

[1] For references to Portuguese writers see A. E. Medlycott: *India and the Apostle Thomas*, pp. 132-133, and A. Mingana: *The Early Spread of Christianity in India*, p. 77. Medlycott gives a quotation from J. P. Maffei: *Historiarum Indicarum Libri*, first published in 1588. Mingana, without quoting, mentions two earlier writers, one of whom, G. Correa, went to India in 1514. The earliest Indian account surviving seems to be the Malayalam poem *Thoma Parvan*, written about 1601 according to Mingana; but see L. W. Brown: *The Indian Christians of St Thomas*, p. 49.

[2] John of Monte Corvino 1292-1293, Odoric 1324-1325, John de Marignolli 1348-1349, Nicolo de Conti c. 1425-1430. See below, chapter III.

was originally buried, which he professed to have seen himself. Gregory of Tours wrote in 590 A.D.[1]

Such is the tradition originating in India. Let us now turn to what the Early Church outside India has to say of the activities of St Thomas. Unfortunately the Fathers give very little information about him. At first indeed they give none at all; but from about the middle of the third century allusions begin. There is general agreement that his sphere of work lay somewhere in the East, but some discrepancy as to the country. The prevailing opinion is that it was India; this is the view accepted by Fathers writing towards the end of the fourth century,—St Ambrose, St Gregory of Nazianzus, St Ephraem the Syrian and St Jerome.[2] With the exception of St Ephraem their references are very slight; they merely bring in St Thomas by way of illustration while writing of other things. It will be sufficient to quote one example from St Jerome which may stand as typical of all the others. His subject is the omnipresence of our Lord after the Resurrection, and he says:

> He dwelt in all places: with Thomas in India, with Peter at Rome, with Paul in Illyricum, with Titus in Crete, with Andrew in Achaia, with each apostolic man in each and all countries.

St Ephraem was a hymn-writer of Syria, who spent the last ten years of his life at Edessa (the modern Urfa in Turkey), one of the chief centres of Christianity in Eastern Syria, which claimed to be the resting place of the bones of St Thomas brought back from India by a Syrian merchant. An annual festival of St Thomas in commemoration of this event was celebrated there on July 3rd, and is still kept in the Syrian churches. St Ephraem has several hymns in honour of St Thomas, in which he sings of the apostle's preaching of the Gospel in India, of the bringing of his bones to Edessa, of the honour that the Edessene Church got thereby, and of miracles wrought at the shrine. They are too long to be quoted in full; but here are four stanzas of one of them:

[1] On the subject of this paragraph see Medlycott, chapter III. Mingana thinks that the monastery seen by Theodore may have been in South Arabia, *op. cit.*, pp. 21 f.

[2] Quotations in Medlycott, pp. 42-45, 22-32.

Blessed art thou, Thomas, the Twin, in thy deeds. Twin is thy spiritual power; nor one thy power, nor one thy name:
But many and signal are they; renowned is thy name among the Apostles.
From my lowly state thee I haste to sing.

Blessed art thou, like unto the solar ray from the great orb; thy grateful dawn India's painful darkness doth dispel.
Thou the great lamp, one among the Twelve, with oil from the Cross replenished, India's dark night floodest with light.

Blessed art thou, O merchant, a treasure who broughtest where so greatly it was needed; thou the wise man, who to secure the great pearl, of thy riches all else thou gavest;
The finder it enriches and ennobles: indeed thou art the merchant who the world endowest.

Blessed art thou, O Thrice-Blessed City, that hast acquired this pearl, none greater doth India yield;
Blessed art thou, worthy to possess the priceless gem.
Praise to thee, O Gracious Son, who thus Thy adorers dost enrich.[1]

To these fourth century Fathers India is the place of St Thomas's labours; but others, of earlier date, say Parthia, that is the Persian Empire stretching from North-west India to Mesopotamia; and of these the most notable is Eusebius the historian, who wrote early in the fourth century. He says:

When the holy apostles and disciples of our Saviour were scattered over all the world, Thomas, so the tradition has it, obtained as his portion Parthia . . .[2]

Eusebius quotes as his authority for this statement the famous Alexandrian Father, Origen (c. 185-254), thus carrying back the tradition to the first half of the third century.[3] According to

[1] Medlycott, pp. 26-27.

[2] *Ecclesiastical History*, III, 1.

[3] He refers to Origen's commentary on Genesis, Book III. It is also found in the apocryphal *Clementine Recognitions* (3rd century), IX, 29. Rufinus (end of 4th century) and Socrates (5th century) repeat Eusebius. For references see H. Heras: *The Two Apostles of India*, p. 1.

Origen and Eusebius, then, it was Parthia to which St Thomas went. Moreover in another place Eusebius says that it was St Bartholomew who went to India.[1]

Such discrepancy may be partly explained by the vague way in which ancient writers in the Roman Empire sometimes use the name India. It is no uncommon thing to find them using it of countries such as Ethiopia, Arabia or Afghanistan. Indeed, except to those who had reason to be acquainted with our India, 'India' was a vague term which might stand for almost any region beyond the Empire's south-eastern frontiers. In what he says of St Bartholomew Eusebius may well have in mind one of the countries bordering on the Red Sea; nor is it absolutely certain that all the fourth century Fathers mentioned above definitely meant our India. Dr Mingana has given it as his opinion that writers in East Syria, which had dealings with India, generally use the name accurately, but that others tend to use it loosely. On the other hand Fr A. C. Perumalil and Fr H. Heras have maintained that these too usually mean our India.[2] However this may be, there is third century evidence connecting St Thomas with Parthia.

Occasionally both India and Parthia are mentioned, as in certain short notes or summaries of the life and work of the apostles, which are found in more or less similar terms ascribed to several writers, and in the Roman Martyrology. On St Thomas one of these reads as follows:

> Thomas preached to the Parthians, Medes and Persians, Hyrcanians, Bactrians and Margians, and was thrust through in the four members of his body with a pine spear at Calamene, the city of India, and was buried there.

This form of the note comes from a fragment attributed to Hippolytus, who wrote at Rome in the early years of the third century. If it were really his, it would be an early witness; but as it is, its value is doubtful. Another form of it, only slightly different, comes from Dorotheus, Bishop of Tyre, about

[1] *Ecclesiastical History*, V, 10, the passage about Pantaenus; see below, p. 19. St Jerome and Rufinus repeat Eusebius. For quotations see H. Heras, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-23.

[2] Mingana, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-13; Heras, *op. cit.*, pp. 21 ff.

the end of the same century. In this the name of the city where the apostle was buried is given as Calamina.[1]

But there is in the third century evidence for the India tradition also. One of the earliest and most notable witnesses is the *Didascalia Apostolorum* (Teaching of the Apostles), a book probably produced in Syria and dated about 250, which contains this statement:

> India and all its own countries, and those bordering on it, even to the farther sea, received the Apostles' Hand of the Priesthood from Judas Thomas, who was Guide and Ruler in the church which he built and ministered there.[2]

The geographical description here is less precise than we could wish; but, if we may assume that our India is meant, we seem to have a statement that St Thomas, who presumably entered the country from the west, worked in several regions and penetrated as far as the east coast. Elsewhere the author refers to epistles written by various apostles from the places where they worked, and he includes in his list those of 'Judas Thomas from India'. No such epistles indeed are known; but it is clear that this writer in the middle of the third century thinks of India as the scene of St Thomas's labours.

We have been dealing hitherto with scattered references, many of them quite casual, and none going into much detail; even St Ephraem, when it comes to what St Thomas actually did in India, contributes only poetical metaphors about the light of the Gospel dispelling heathen darkness, and so forth. But there is one book entirely about St Thomas, which does purport to give a fairly copious account of his travels, his works, his teaching and his martyrdom. This is the *Acts of Thomas*, another Syrian book, to be dated perhaps about the middle of the third century.

When one considers the prominence the twelve apostles have had in Christian thought and worship, it is remarkable how little the New Testament and the writings of the generations imme-

[1] Medlycott, pp. 151-152, gives four versions. The other two are from Sophronius (7th century) and an anonymous writer. The place Calamene or Calamina has not been satisfactorily identified, in spite of much conjecture.

[2] Medlycott, pp. 35 f. In Syrian writings the apostle is regularly called Judas Thomas. Thomas means 'twin'.

diately following theirs tell us of their doings. The *Acts of the Apostles* alone attempts to relate their history; but even this book, after recording some of the early activities of St Peter and St John and the martyrdom of St James, becomes a biography of St Paul, and quite ignores the others. The fact is that we lack any contemporary information about them. The lack was felt in the Early Church, and from about the middle of the second century attempts were made to supply what was missing. It was about that time that one Leucius produced a book called the *Acts of John*. Others followed his example, and the result was a series of works proffering stories of the words and deeds of several of the apostles, and commonly known as the Apocryphal Acts. Much, indeed most, of the material they contain is legendary, though here and there they may be founded on fact. What is worse is that often the teaching they put into the mouths of the apostles is unorthodox; the aim of the writers was to popularize their peculiar opinions by connecting them with one or other of the great New Testament figures. It was because of this that the heretical sect of the Manichees in the fourth century accepted the first five of these Apocryphal Acts as Scripture in preference to the *Acts of the Apostles* in the New Testament. One of these, commonly reckoned the fifth of the series, is the *Acts of Thomas*.[1]

In view of what has just been said the reader will be prepared to find the contents of this apocryphal book peculiar. Not only are many of the incidents fantastic, but a large part of St Thomas's teaching and effort is designed to establish the doctrine that marriage is sinful and that Christians ought to abstain from it. In the beginning of the story the twelve apostles, assembled at Jerusalem, cast lots to determine to which countries each of them shall go. The country that falls to St Thomas is India; but he refuses to go there, and persists in his refusal even after a dream, in which the Lord bids him abandon his fear and go. Then a merchant appears on the scene, who has been sent from India by a king called Gundaphorus[2] with instructions to buy and bring back a slave who is a carpenter, in order to

[1] For a concise account of the Apocryphal Acts see M. R. James: *The Apocryphal New Testament*, pp. xx f. For the text of the *Acts of Thomas* (in English), *ibid.*, pp. 365 ff.

[2] Various spellings of this name are found: Gondophares, Gondapharna, Gudnaphar, etc. The one used above comes from the Greek version of the *Acts*.

design and build him a palace. The Lord Jesus points out Thomas to this man, and sells him to him for 36 ozs. of silver; after which Thomas and the merchant set out on the sea voyage to India. On the way they attend a wedding feast at a place called Andrapolis, where after the prayer of Thomas and an appearance of the Lord Jesus the bride and bridegroom decide to live in celibacy. Having arrived in India Thomas meets King Gundaphorus, and the site and plan of the palace are agreed upon. Thomas undertakes to build it in six months, and the king advances him a large sum of money and goes away; but Thomas, instead of building, goes about distributing the money to the poor, and when at last the king comes, no palace is to be seen. In answer to the king's inquiries Thomas says that he has indeed built it, but the king will not be able to see it until he has departed this life. The king is very angry, and sends both Thomas and the merchant to prison. While he is devising a punishment for them, the king's brother, Gad, falls ill and dies and, being taken by angels to heaven, is asked by them which of the mansions he sees there he would like for a dwelling-place. He chooses a certain building, only to be told that he cannot have it, because it is the palace which 'that Christian' built for his brother. Gad asks to be allowed to go back and buy the palace from his brother. Permission having been given, he returns to life and astonishes Gundaphorus by his reappearance and his request. As a result Thomas is released from prison; both Gundaphorus and Gad are baptized and receive the Eucharist; and Thomas continues his preaching, making many converts in that kingdom.

Several other episodes follow, mainly concerned with the casting out of devils and the conversion of people to a celibate life, and then Thomas is sent for by an officer of another king, called Misdeus (or Mazdai), in another part of India, to heal the officer's wife and daughter, who are possessed with devils. Leaving the Christians in charge of a deacon he goes, and in due course the women are restored to sanity. After this certain noble women at the court of King Misdeus, including his own wife, come under the influence of Thomas, and declare their intention to abandon marriage. They persist in their resolution in spite of all that the aggrieved husbands can do, and are baptized by Thomas, who by this time has been cast into prison for introducing such disturbing teaching. Other notable people are converted also, among them the king's son and his wife; whereupon King Misdeus becomes so enraged that he determines

to put Thomas to death. He is taken outside the city by four soldiers, who kill him with their spears, but not before he has ordained a presbyter and a deacon from among his noble converts. A long time afterwards, one of King Misdeus's children being grievously possessed with a devil, the king bethinks him of the martyred apostle and has the tomb opened in the hope that the touch of the holy man's bones may cure the child. But the grave is found empty, because 'one of the brethren had stolen him away and taken him to Mesopotamia'.[1] However Misdeus takes some of the dust from the tomb and puts it on the child's neck, professing faith in Jesus Christ, and the child is cured. Thereafter King Misdeus too is converted and is 'gathered among the brethren', who pray for him that his former persecution of the Christians may be forgiven.

Such, very briefly, is the story of the *Acts of Thomas*. Is there any truth in it? That much of it is legendary is obvious; are we to conclude that the whole is fiction, or may it be that there is some genuine tradition of a mission of St Thomas to India underlying it, which the author has worked up into this fantastic story? Probably few people would be prepared to admit more than a very few grains of historical truth in it; but there does seem to be a little. The king Gundaphorus at any rate is a historical character. Since 1834 numerous coins have been found in the Punjab and in Afghanistan bearing his name in Greek on one side and in Pali on the other; they are dated on palaeographical grounds in the first half of the first century A.D., and their number suggests that his reign was a fairly long one. There is also a stone inscription (the Takht-i-Bahi stone, now in the Lahore Museum, Pakistan) containing his name and a date which is interpreted as 46 A.D.; this is described as the twenty-sixth year of his reign. In some of the coins the name of Gad is also found. That period of Indian history is a very obscure one; but it seems that round about the beginning of the Christian era the north-western parts of India and Pakistan with some countries further west were ruled by Parthian princes, of whom Gundaphorus was the last. About the middle of the first century his kingdom was invaded and overcome by a people from Central Asia known to history as the Kushans. If, then, St Thomas did come to India about the time when he is supposed

[1] This point in the story seems to show that the India tradition was current in Mesopotamia before the *Acts* were written.

to have come, he may well have arrived during the latter years of Gundaphorus's reign. Of course the fact that the author of the *Acts* got the name of a contemporary king right is no guarantee of the other details of his story; but it certainly is a remarkable thing to find the name of this Indo-Parthian ruler brought in with fair chronological accuracy by an author writing in a far-distant country some two hundred years later. This may be an indication that the author has received a tradition of St Thomas's mission to India which he has filled out with stories, and not simply invented the whole thing. It would however be risky to assume that such a tradition contained anything more than the bare facts that the apostle went to a region variously called India or Parthia, preached the Gospel, made converts and there met his death.[1]

Another question raised by the *Acts of Thomas* is this: How far do the Fathers depend on this book in what they say of St Thomas, and, if this is indeed their authority, how much are their statements worth? B. H. Streeter has pointed out several instances in which Fathers of the second and third centuries do seem to be relying on apocryphal Acts, even though they were known to be apocryphal, and has drawn attention to the way in which a statement made by one Father on such authority may be repeated in all good faith by others and become the received opinion.[2] None of his instances concerns St Thomas, and in general the references to this apostle are so slight as to make it very difficult to judge whence they may have been derived. It is no doubt possible that some of the Fathers we have referred to were influenced indirectly by the *Acts*. Once one's suspicions have been aroused, Eusebius's description of the way in which each apostle was allotted his sphere of work, or the reference in the *Didascalia* to ordinations by St Thomas, inevitably call to mind incidents in the *Acts*, so that one wonders whether there is a connexion. But on the other hand the firm mention of Parthia, and not India, by Eusebius and Origen, and the name Calamina in the notes of 'Hippolytus' and others, seem to be signs of an independent tradition; and, as Streeter himself says, 'in the majority of cases . . . when the Fathers quote a "tradition", it is probable that they are not referring directly to the text of Apocryphal Acts, but to stories current by word of mouth'.[3] The

[1] On Gundaphorus see Medlycott, chapter I.
[2] *The Primitive Church*, chapter I.
[3] *ibid.*, p. 15.

only thing which could put the matter entirely beyond doubt would be some statement in a writer quite definitely earlier than the earliest possible date for the *Acts*, that is well back in the second century, and unfortunately there is no such. The *Didascalia*, Origen and 'Hippolytus' *may* be earlier; but we cannot be absolutely sure.[1] One thing at least may be said: if the Fathers we have quoted do depend on the *Acts* for their information, they have shown great reserve in making use of them; if they had wished to go into more detail, the *Acts* would have given them scope. It seems best to conclude that in the main they rely on the common, though scanty, tradition about St Thomas.

After this short survey of what the Early Church has to say about St Thomas it is relevant to ask what support it gives to the Malabar tradition from which we set out. So far as direct and explicit support is concerned, the answer must be, None. Neither the Fathers nor the apocryphal *Acts* say anything explicitly about Malabar, or the seven churches and their local traditions, or about the Brahmins of Mylapore. Nor, unless 'even to the farther sea' in the *Didascalia* means the Coromandel coast and the mysterious Calamina stands for a place in the South, is there anything which of itself positively requires to be understood of South India. On the other hand references to Parthia and Gundaphorus suggest the North-west. Yet the Malabar tradition is not thereby disproved. It may yet be true, as many people believe; only the evidence for it is not the statements of the Fathers but the continuous tradition of the Malabar Church. Those who hold that tradition will naturally interpret what the Fathers say in accordance with it, wherever they can; but the governing factor is the tradition rather than the statements; it is because people believe the tradition that they so interpret the Fathers. The tradition stands by itself; and it ought not to be lightly assumed that a tradition handed down from ancient times in a living community which still exists is necessarily a worse historical witness than certain scanty, and often vague, statements in books written far away from India by men who evidently had little information at their disposal.

We have found the evidence for the belief that the Church in India was founded by St Thomas to be of three kinds. There is the tradition of the Syrian Christians of Malabar, strong and

[1] Mingana thinks the author of the *Didascalia* is not under the influence of the *Acts*.

constant in the community, but lacking clear documentary support. There are sundry references in the Fathers, not contemporary but beginning only in the third century, slight, somewhat vague and to some extent conflicting. And there is the apocryphal story. Clearly such evidence is not enough to establish the true state of affairs beyond doubt. It has in fact led to different interpretations, and in them all there is a large element of conjecture. This chapter may conclude with a short account of the various opinions which have been put forward.

1. First we put the traditional opinion. Since at least the middle of the fourth century (possibly earlier) it has been the general belief of the Christian Church that St Thomas preached and suffered martyrdom in India. This is what may be called the general tradition. There is also the local Malabar tradition of his arrival at Cranganore, his foundation of churches at certain places, his ordinations from certain families, his further travels and his death at Mylapore. The general tradition is supported by statements of the Fathers from the third century onwards; the local Malabar tradition stands alone, firmly believed by the Syrian Christians.

2. Some historians have rejected the tradition altogether and denied that St Thomas ever came to this country. Such are the French historians Basnage (Protestant) and Tillemont (Roman Catholic) at the end of the seventeenth century, La Croze (Protestant) in the eighteenth, and the English Protestants James Hough and Sir John Kaye in the nineteenth. Some of these denials may have been due in part to an assumption that, in the state of communications then prevailing, a Palestinian Jew would not be likely to travel to India in the first century A.D. But it is now known that there were regular communications and trade by sea between the west coast of India and the Roman Empire at that time, via the Red Sea and Alexandria; so that such a journey is by no means as improbable as it once seemed. Moreover it seems that there were Jews in India both in the ports on the west coast and in the north-west. Nowadays there is much less inclination to deny St Thomas's mission to India outright than there was in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

3. Some are willing to admit that St Thomas may have visited North India—or rather Pakistan—but deny that he ever came to South India. That is to say, they accept the suggestions of Indo-Parthia in the literary sources, but reject the South Indian tradition entirely. Representatives of this way of thinking

are G. Milne Rae, a former professor at the Madras Christian College, whose book *The Syrian Church in India* (1892) provoked indignant criticism from the Syrian Christians because of this denial, and the German Fr J. Dahlmann. According to these writers Syrian immigrants of a later date brought with hem a tradition that it was St Thomas to whom the Church in their homeland owed its ministry, and they, connecting this with the belief of the Early Church that he had gone to India, produced the local tradition of Malabar. This of course is conjecture, and some may feel that it is unnecessarily sceptical. As has just been said, outright denials, or indeed confident pronouncements of any kind, are less common now than formerly. The tendency is rather to admit the possibility of the South Indian apostolate but to express gentle doubt or suspend judgement in view of the lack of conclusive proof. Thus J. E. Keay writes:

> The visit of St Thomas to South India cannot be positively proved. The question has been much discussed and there seems little prospect that a final verdict can be given. The local tradition with regard to his visit is very strong and there is no other rival local tradition as to the origin of the Church in South India. The tradition has been held also outside India both in the West and in the East from very early times. There is nothing improbable in the story that the Apostle should have travelled as far as India to preach the Gospel. If the story cannot be proved, it is certainly by no means unlikely.[1]

And Bishop Brown writes:

> We cannot prove that the Apostle worked in South India any more than we can disprove that fact; but the presence of Christians of undoubtedly ancient origin holding firmly to the tradition, the proof of very considerable commercial contact between the western world and the Malabar coast in the first century of our era, and the probable presence of Jewish colonies at the same time, may for some incline the balance to belief that the truth of the tradition is a reasonable probability. The evidence we have cannot do more than this.[2]

[1] *History of the Syrian Church in India*, p. 14.

[2] *The Indian Christians of St Thomas*, p. 59.

He himself however inclines to the view that traders from East Syria and Persia, settling in Malabar, brought the tradition of a Church founded by St Thomas with them and, so to say, naturalized it.[1] On North India he does not pronounce.

4. Others, such as the Syrian Christian writers E. M. Philip and K. N. Daniel, strenuously defend the southern apostolate and deny that the apostle visited the north.[2] Standing within the Malabar tradition, they are at pains to interpret the literary evidence so as to agree with it. They point out that the trade relations of the Roman Empire with India were chiefly with South India and the Dravidian peoples; so that, if St Thomas came by sea, he would be more likely to come to Malabar than to the north-west. They point to the absence of any surviving trace of a Christian community in those northern regions. They either disparage the *Acts of Thomas* as a mere story (K. N. Daniel) or try to make out that the scene of the story is really South India; according to E. M. Philip Andrapolis is really Cranganore, and Gundaphorus is really Kandapparaja, a Tamil king in the region of Mylapore, and so on. It is plain that here also there is a good deal of guesswork, not to say special pleading. Yet these writers deserve sympathy when they seek to assert their ancestral tradition against denials of it which seem to them to rest on flimsy evidence. For the North Indian theory rests to a great extent on the name Gundaphorus in the *Acts*. If St Thomas really had dealings with a king called Gundaphorus, they must have taken place in the Indo-Parthian kingdom; but whether this is more than a story embellished with a historical person's name is indeed questionable. Western writers have perhaps tended to lay too much stress on it and too little on the Malabar church tradition.

5. Others, wishing to do justice to all the evidence, hold that the apostle visited both the North and the South. Bishop Medlycott thinks of two separate journeys, one from Palestine through Mesopotamia and Persia by land to what is now Pakistan, the other, after a return to Palestine, via Egypt and Ethiopia to Socotra and thence across the Arabian Sea to Malabar.[3] J. N. Farquhar thinks of one extended mission in the East. He holds

[1] *ibid.*, pp. 65-66.

[2] E.M. Philip: *The Indian Church of St Thomas*, especially chapter IV; K. N. Daniel: *The South Indian Apostolate of St Thomas*.

[3] *op. cit.*, pp. 147-148.

that St Thomas first went via Parthia to the Punjab, but had to leave because of the Kushan invasion, which eventually wiped out the Christians of that region so that no trace remained; that he left India by sea, landed in Socotra and spent some time there, during which he made converts and founded a Church; and that afterwards he sailed for India again and came to Malabar, whence in due course he crossed over to the east coast. Farquhar is even prepared to admit that he travelled on to countries beyond India, not indeed as far as China, but across the Bay of Bengal to Burma, and that it was after returning from this journey that he was martyred at Mylapore.[1] Fr Heras's view is similar, except that he makes St Thomas visit Kalyan (see p. 19) before embarking for Socotra, and does not provide for a visit to Burma.[2] If the Malabar tradition and all the scraps of literary evidence are somehow to be pieced together, the result will be something like this. Guesswork is again involved, and perhaps the resulting theory is a little too neat and tidy to be wholly convincing. But it is certainly not impossible that St Thomas should have visited both Pakistan and South India.

None of these views can be regarded as proved. Consequently we must either suspend judgement altogether or admit that whatever opinion we hold depends to a large extent on conjecture, with or without loyalty to a church tradition. With this proviso and without any strong conviction I should be willing to agree that St Thomas did perhaps visit both Indo-Parthia and South India. For it does not seem possible entirely to disregard the element of historical truth in the connexion with Gundaphorus, or to refuse all value to the evidence of the Fathers; and as for the theory that the Malabar tradition is only an import, I think that no more can be said for that than for the St Thomas tradition in general, namely that it is possible.

[1] *The Apostle Thomas in North India* and *The Apostle Thomas in South India* (Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, Manchester, X, 1 and XI, 1).

[2] *The Two Apostles of India*, pp. 39-44.

Chapter II

INDIA AND THE CHURCH OF THE EAST
(Up to the Ninth Century)

It is impossible to present the history of the Church in India up to the sixteenth century as a connected story, because sufficient materials are lacking. From time to time we get glimpses of the Church in this country, sometimes in the writings of people in other lands who in one way or another had to do with India, sometimes in traditions preserved in the Syrian community, very occasionally in a few monuments and inscriptions. But they are fleeting glimpses, tantalizing in their brevity and too often accompanied by obscurity. The one fact which emerges from this period with full clearness is the connexion of the Church in India with the Church in East Syria, or Mesopotamia, and Persia. It was not an autonomous Church; it received its bishops from Mesopotamia, and its ecclesiastical language was Syriac. In the early centuries it would appear that a considerable number of its members were Syrian or Persian by race. They generally intermingled with the people of the country and became Indianized; and no doubt converts were made also among those of Indian birth, though to a limited extent. The Christians were always a minority.

The first two centuries immediately following the Apostolic Age are almost a complete blank. How any communitie that may have been left behind by St Thomas fared in that period we have no means of knowing. It would not be surprising if they languished. This at any rate was the impression left in the minds of Syrians many generations later. An Indian writer of the eighteenth century says: 'After the death of the Apostle Thomas, India and also Malabar were without a preacher and leader, apart from the priests ordained by St Thomas. After ninety-two years, India and Malabar became without priests, having only believing men and women.'[1] This document comes too late to be taken as a real historical authority for that early period; but perhaps the general impression is not far wrong.

[1] Mingana, p. 43, translating a document written in Syriac by a Jacobite from Malabar.

The possibility of a glimpse at the early Indian Church is suggested by a passage in Eusebius, where he speaks of a visit of Pantaenus, a noted Christian teacher of Alexandria, to 'the land of the Indians' shortly before A.D. 190.[1] Eusebius says that Pantaenus found among the Christians there a copy of the Gospel according to St Matthew in 'Hebrew' characters, which was said to have been left by St Bartholomew, who had preached in that country. St Jerome, who repeats this, evidently understood the India in question to be our India, for he adds that Pantaenus, who was a philosopher, was sent 'to preach Christ among the Brahmins and philosophers of that nation.'[2] Some modern writers (e.g. Rae, Philip, J. N. Ogilvie) have accepted this, although the mention of St Bartholomew instead of St Thomas and the Hebrew (or Aramaic) gospel of St Matthew make difficulties. But the majority are convinced that the 'land of the Indians' which Pantaenus visited was not our India, but South Arabia. Dr Mingana is very emphatic:

> ... the India they refer to is without doubt Arabia Felix. The fact has been recognized by all historians since Assemani and Tillemont, and has been considered as established even by such a conservative writer as Medlycot. It will be a matter of surprise if any responsible author will ever mention in the future Pantaenus in connection with India proper.[3]

Nevertheless Fr Heras, following Fr A.C. Perumalil, has accepted the mission of Pantaenus to India as historical, and with it the earlier mission of St Bartholomew. On the basis of certain seventh and tenth century writings, which say that St Bartholomew went to 'India Felix', he regards this apostle as founder of a Christian community at Kalyan, near Bombay, since the Latin word *felix* has the same meaning as the Sanskrit *kalyana*.[4] There is a good deal of speculation in Fr Heras's reconstruction of events; but even Bishop Brown says, 'It may be that scholars have dismissed too lightly the story of Pantaenus's visit and his discovery of a Gospel brought by Bartholomew', and admits the

[1] *Ecclesiastical History*, V, 10.

[2] *Epistle* 70; *De Viris Illustribus*, 36.

[3] *op. cit.*, p. 71. Assemani and Tillemont wrote in the eighteenth and late seventeenth centuries respectively.

[4] *op. cit.*, pp. 21-35.

possibility that both may have come to India, though there is no positive proof.[1]

When, however, certain fourth and fifth century writers say that 'India' first received Christianity in the time of the Roman Emperor Constantine I (313-337) through Edesius and Frumentius, it is universally agreed that Abyssinia is meant.[2]

A more credible reference relates to the closing years of the third century. About 295-300 Dūdi (David), Bishop of Basra (in Mesopotamia near the head of the Persian Gulf), 'left his see and went to India, where he evangelized many people.'[3] We are not told how long Bishop Dūdi lived in India, which part of the country he visited or whether he found Christians there. It is most natural, in view of later history, to suppose that he went with the intention of visiting Christian communities. This is the first reference to a bishop's being in the country, and it is noteworthy that he was a Mesopotamian bishop. So early does the connexion with Mesopotamia and the East Syrian Church begin to appear.

Among the bishops who signed the decrees of the First General Council of the Church at Nicaea in 325, according to one account, was John of Persia, who signed as representing 'churches in the whole of Persia and Great India'. Unless 'Great India' refers to Abyssinia and Arabia Felix, we have here an indication that there were Christians in India at that time, and that they were under the jurisdiction of a bishop in Persia From another source we learn that Bishop John was a Syrian.[4] Another account however gives the name as only 'John of Persia.'[5]

About the year 354 the Roman Emperor Constantius sent a Christian embassy to certain countries bordering on the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea, under the leadership of an Arian bishop known to history as Theophilus the Indian.[6] This

[1] *op. cit.*, p. 63. As he says, the Bartholomew tradition has never been considered very seriously, because it was overwhelmed by the Thomas tradition.

[2] See Mingana, pp. 24-26; Medlycott, pp. 182-187; also B. J. Kidd: *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Church*, II, pp. 276 f.

[3] Mingana, p. 18. [4] *ibid.*, pp. 63-64.

[5] E. Tisserant and E. R. Hambye: *Eastern Christianity in India*, p. 7.

[6] Medlycott, pp. 188-202. The embassy is recorded by Philostorgius, an Arian historian who wrote in the early fifth century. (Arianism is a heresy which caused a great controversy in the Church in the fourth century.)

Theophilus appears to have been a native of the Maldive Islands; in his youth he had been sent to Rome as a hostage, and while in the West he had become a Christian. After finishing his work in South Arabia he visited his native place, and from there went on to 'other parts of India'. There, says the historian, he 'reformed many things which were not rightly done among them; for they heard the reading of the Gospel [at the Eucharist] in a sitting posture, and did other things which were repugnant to the divine law; and having reformed everything according to the holy usage, as was most acceptable to God, he also confirmed the dogma of the Church'. If this account indeed refers to our India,—in which case Malabar is most likely to be meant, as being the part of India nearest to the Maldive Islands—,it is evidence of an organized Church with a ministry celebrating the Eucharist, which was old enough to have developed certain indigenous peculiarities, such as sitting for the Gospel. This particular peculiarity suggests a state of isolation and neglect.

There is a little evidence of relations between the Indian and Syrian Churches in the fifth century in the matter of study. A Syriac commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, produced at Edessa, contains the note, 'This Epistle has been translated from Greek into Syriac, by Mar Komai, with the help of Daniel the priest, the Indian'. That was in about 425, at the time when Edessa was beginning to be the centre of theological study for the East Syrian Church. Daniel is perhaps the first Indian theological student known to history. The passage is also evidence, as Mingana points out, that the ecclesiastical language of the Indian Church was Syriac, and not any Indian language.[1]

Again another Syrian scholar, Mana, Bishop of Riwardashir in Persia about 470, who besides writing a number of treatises and hymns of his own translated from Greek into Syriac the works of the Antiochene theologians Diodore of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia, is recorded to have sent to India all the books he had translated.[2] He evidently knew that they would find readers in this country.

Round about the year 522 a Christian merchant of Alexandria, called Cosmas, in the course of his business visited some of the countries around the Arabian Sea, among them Ceylon and the west coast of India. Later this much-travelled man, who has received the title of Indicopleustes (Sailor to India), became a

[1] Mingana, pp. 27 f. [2] *ibid.*, p. 28.

monk in the Sinai peninsula and wrote a book on the basis of his travels, called *Universal Christian Topography*. He wrote it to advocate a certain theory which he had formed about the shape of the earth, and we could wish that he had been more interested in history and current affairs; but his book contains a few notes, interesting and valuable but all too brief, on the Christian Church in those lands. This is what he says:

> Even in the island of Taprobane [Ceylon] in Inner India where the Indian Sea is, there is a Church of Christians, with clergy and a congregation of believers, though I know not if there be any Christians further in that direction. And such also is the case in the land called Male [Malabar], where the pepper grows. And in the place called Kalliana there is a bishop appointed from Persia, as well as in the island called Dioscoris [Socotra], in the same Indian Sea. The inhabitants of that island speak Greek, having been originally settled there by the Ptolemies, who ruled after Alexander of Macedon. There are clergy there also ordained and sent from Persia to minister among the people of the island, and a multitude of Christians . . . And so likewise among the Bactrians and Huns and Persians, and the rest of the Indians, and among the Persarmenians and Greeks and Elamites, and throughout the whole land of Persia, there is an infinite number of Churches with bishops, and a vast multitude of Christian people, and they have many martyrs and recluses leading a monastic life.[1]

The passage has been quoted at length because it gives, as it were, a bird's eye view of Asian Christianity in the early part of the sixth century. It shows the Christians as communities scattered throughout all the countries of the Arabian Sea and of the Persian Empire, all ecclesiastically dependent on the Persian Church; and it is in this context that the Indian Church appears. Some of those communities consisted entirely or mainly of immigrants from the Persian Empire,—traders or others—,as in Ceylon, of which Cosmas says separately:

> The island hath also a Church of Persian Christians who have settled there, and a Presbyter who is appointed from Persia,

[1] Quoted in Mingana, pp. 29-30; also in Kidd's *Documents*, III, p. 31. The Bactrians etc., are peoples living in Central Asia and throughout the Persian dominions.

> and a deacon, and all the apparatus of public worship. But the natives and their kings are quite another kind of people.[1]

As we shall see shortly, the Indian Church too contained a considerable element of foreign settlers,—whence the name 'Syrian' Christians—,though there is no reason to doubt that it also contained Indians. But the point to notice is that the Christian communities in India were part of a general church organization whose headquarters were in 'Persia'. The same is true of all Asian Christians at that time outside the Roman Empire.

The specific information which Cosmas gives us about the Church in India is: that it existed in Malabar and in some other parts of India ('the rest of the Indians'), and that it had at least one bishop, who was consecrated in 'Persia' and had his seat at a place called Kalliana. Whether this Kalliana is Quilon, in Travancore, or Kalyan, on the mainland north-east of Bombay, opinions differ; the spelling favours the latter, and we have evidence of a Christian community in those parts in the Middle Ages.[2] As to the communities in other parts of India he is quite vague, for he had not visited them; but for the Malabar Church he is an eye-witness.

We have already had occasion to notice a connexion between the Church in India and the Church in Mesopotamia or East Syria, and here we find Cosmas insisting on its connexion with Persia. It is necessary to make clear that, whether the word used be Mesopotamia, East Syria or Persia, the Church in question is one and the same. Its centre was actually in Mesopotamia; but Mesopotamia was politically part of Persia. Moreover it was a Syriac-speaking Church, connected with Edessa, that early centre of Syriac Christianity, in East Syria. After the middle of the fourth century the region of Edessa, which had long been border country in dispute between the Roman Empire and its eastern enemies, also became part of the Persian Empire.[3] The name Persia therefore covers Mesopotamia and

[1] Quoted in Mingana, *ibid.* [2] At Thana; see below, p. 39.

[3] At the beginning of the Christian era the ruling dynasty (the Arsacid) was Parthian, and the territory is called Parthia. From 220 A.D. a new dynasty (the Sassanid) from Persia proper came to power, and thereafter it is called Persia. The student may assume that Parthia, mentioned in chapter I, and Persia here a e roughly the same territory, lying between the rivers Euphrates and Indus.

East Syria, and the Church which Cosmas mentions is in fact the East Syrian Church that we have already mentioned. Inasmuch as this Church plays an important part in Indian Church History and will come before us again in later chapters, it will be well to pause here and say a little more about it.

In the early centuries the chief Christian centre in the whole region of Syria and Mesopotamia was Antioch, and the Bishop of Antioch was recognized as the chief bishop or Patriarch,[1] as he came to be called, throughout the area The other cities had their bishops too, and in accordance with the developing custom of the Church those of the principal (or metropolitan) cities had jurisdiction over the bishops of the smaller places in the sphere of influence of those cities. Now there was a very important pair of cities in the southern part of Mesopotamia, facing each other on opposite banks of the river Tigris: Seleucia on the west bank and Ctesiphon on the east. Ctesiphon was the capital of the Parthian Empire, and Seleucia was a great centre of commerce. Once Christianity had spread to Seleucia-Ctesiphon and beyond, it was natural that this pair of cities should become an important Christian centre, and in fact from at least the end of the third century we find that its bishop has under his authority all the bishops of places further east, even the metropolitan ones. He is called the Catholicos of the East, and is almost a Patriarch himself, though still subordinate to the Patriarch of Antioch. Catholicos means general bishop.

To begin with, all this area was one and Antioch recognized as the Patriarchal See; but later Mesopotamia became separate. There were various reasons for this. In the first place there was a difference of language and race; Antioch and the cities of West Syria were Greek, but Mesopotamia spoke Syriac, and there were differences in the Greek and Syriac expressions of Christianity. But besides the difference of language and race there came to be a political division. In the second century the whole region was in the Roman Empire; but in the third and fourth the Persians after a series of wars finally dispossessed the Romans and made Mesopotamia part of their dominions. Under the Persian regime the Christians were terribly persecuted, partly on religious grounds,—for the Persian kings were anxious to revive the national religion of Zoroastrianism—,but partly

[1] This title comes into use only from the fifth century onwards; but the influence it represents was exercised much earlier.

because they were suspected of being on the side of the Romans, Christianity being the Romans' religion. Thus the Christians not only found themselves cut off from Antioch by a political barrier, but saw that the connexion they had with their fellow-Christians in the Roman Empire was a source of danger to them. Therefore they decided to proclaim their Church independent of the Church in the Roman Empire, and in consideration of this the Persian kings began to be more willing to tolerate Christianity. The authority of the Catholicos was increased, until he was a Patriarch in all but name. Finally at a synod held in 424 he was proclaimed entirely independent of the Patriarch of Antioch, so that in future no appeal should be made to Antioch against any of his decisions.[1] From 498 he assumed the title of Patriarch of the East. At a later date we also find him referred to as Patriarch of Babylon (for the ancient Babylon was in the same part of Mesopotamia).[2] Under him were five metropolitan bishops.

During the fifth century Persia (Mesopotamia) became the refuge of a number of bishops expelled from the Roman Empire because of their support of the teaching of Nestorius, which had been condemned as heresy in 431; and, to cut a long story short, at the end of that century a Nestorian became Patriarch[3] and thereafter Nestorianism became the official doctrine of the Church of the East as a whole,—whence it is often called the Nestorian Church. This was not done without protest however, and the minority was reinforced in the following century, when a change of policy on the part of the Roman Emperor caused a number of adherents of the heresy opposite to Nestorianism (i.e. Monophysitism) to be driven out. Many of these Monophysites settled in Persia. They shared in the revival of the Monophysite party brought about by the wandering bishop Jacob Baradai (542-577), from whom they are also known as Jacobites. Later a rival Catholicos (or Maphrian, as the Jacobites say) was consecrated, whose successors continued in opposition to the Nestorian

[1] This synod's decision may be seen in Kidd's *Documents*, II, pp. 198 f.

[2] In the letter of the four Nestorian bishops from India in 1504 (see below, p. 44) he is styled both Catholicos and Patriarch of the East. The earlier title did not die out.

[3] The Catholicos Babai (497-503).

Patriarchs; but the Nestorian body was the greater in the Persian Empire.[1]

It was the Church of the East of which the Christian communities in India were part. The 'bishop appointed from Persia', whom Cosmas found in the place called Kalliana, was a bishop consecrated either by the Catholicos (or Patriarch of the East) himself or more probably by one of his Metropolitans, the Bishop of Riwardashir in Persia proper.[2] At the time when Cosmas was in India (about 522) only about twenty-five years had elapsed since the first Nestorian Patriarch was installed, and whether this bishop was a Nestorian or not we are not told. In any case the connexion of the Indian Christians with the East Syrian Church went back before the time of its adoption of Nestorianism and before the breach with Antioch, and it may be doubted whether many of them were aware of the changes that had taken place. They had been loyal members of the Church of the East when the Catholicos was subordinate to the Patriarch of Antioch, and they continued to be loyal members both before and after the introduction of Nestorianism; but, unless recent arrivals from Mesopotamia and Persia had done intensive propaganda among them, it is unlikely that these changes meant much to the Christians of India. Still their bishop and the more knowledgeable of the clergy, one would think, must have been aware of them; and any who had read the translations of Diodore and Theodore, which Mana, Bishop of Riwardashir, had sent to India some fifty years earlier, must have had their minds prepared for the Nestorian doctrine, for it was to these two teachers that Nestorius himself owed his point of view. Indeed it looks as if that enterprising bishop's aim in sending them was to spread the new theology.

But there is a further reason for his solicitude for the theological instruction of the brethren in India. At some time between 400 and 420 the bishopric of Riwardashir was made a metropolitan

[1] The doctrinal difference between Nestorianism and Monophysitism concerns a difficult point of theology, how our Lord Jesus Christ can be both God and Man. Nestorianism so emphasizes the difference between Godhead and Manhood as to give the impression that in the incarnate Christ there are two persons, a man and a divine Being indwelling him. Monophysitism so emphasizes the divinity of our Lord as to give the impression that the incarnate Christ is purely God, the human nature being, as it were, swallowed up by the divine. This is only a rough summary of the extreme positions on either side.

[2] Near the modern Bushire on the eastern shore of the Persian Gulf.

bishopric for Persia proper, and it would appear that India also came under its jurisdiction.[1] This means that bishops serving in India would be consecrated by the Metropolitan of Riwardashir, and would be answerable primarily to him; so it was as their ecclesiastical superior that Bishop Mana sent the books for the use of the clergy in India. This arrangement continued for about a century and a half longer until the time of the Patriarch Isho-Yahb II (628-643), when a Metropolitan was appointed for India separately; which meant that in future he would consecrate bishops for India and preside over the Church in that country under the direct control of the Patriarch. The Metropolitans of Riwardashir seem to have resented this curtailment of their authority, and for a long time they resisted it and made attempts to act as before, even, it would appear, being prepared at one time to make a schism over the matter. There is a letter of the Patriarch Isho-Yahb III (650-660), in which he (rather obscurely) remonstrates with Simeon, Metropolitan of Riwardashir, on this subject, and we find it coming up again more than a hundred years later in the time of the Patriarch Timothy I (779-823), who was able to get the dispute amicably settled. The metropolitan bishopric in India continued; but unfortunately there is no indication whereabouts in India the seat of this metropolitan was. Nor do we know where the other bishops in India or their flocks were. We know that there was a body of Christians, perhaps the chief one, in Malabar; but there must have been Christian communities in other parts of India also, for Isho-Yahb III in his letter describes the ecclesiastical province of India as extending 'from the borders of the Persian Empire to the country which is called Kalah, which is a distance of 1200 parasangs.'[2] The Metropolitan of India and those of China and Samarkand were excused, because of the great distance, from attending the general synods of the Church held in Persia. Instead they had to write a letter to the Patriarch once every six years, declaring their allegiance to him and informing him of the state of their provinces. It does not appear however that any of these letters from India has survived from this period.[3]

[1] Thus, although in any case the Church is the same, Cosmas is correct in saying Persia.

[2] Kalah is possibly Galla (Galle) in Ceylon. Quilon and some place in Malaya have also been suggested. A parasang is nearly 3½ miles.

[3] On the subject of this paragraph see Mingana, *op. cit.*, pp. 64, 61, 31-33, 34-35 and *The Early Spread of Christianity in Central Asia and the Far East*, pp. 76 and 27.

Hitherto in this chapter we have looked at the early Indian Church from the outside, depending on the evidence of foreigners writing about it from other countries, and we have tried to see it as part of the Church of the East, linked up, as other provinces of that widespread Church were, with the Patriarch of the East. We have seen that it developed sufficiently to be given a metropolitan of its own in the seventh century, but that it was somewhat remote from ecclesiastical headquarters and therefore to a very large extent left to itself. Now we must turn to see what can be learnt from the traditions, inscriptions and monuments of India itself. These are not abundant, and they are almost entirely confined to South India, especially Malabar.

Here the fact which we have already stressed,—the connexion of Indian Christianity with that of East Syria, Mesopotamia and Persia—,appears again very clearly. The Syrian Church of Malabar has traditions of at least two considerable immigrations of influential people from those countries, who settled down in India and did much to revive and strengthen the Church here.

The first of these immigrations is commonly ascribed to the year 345, and is said to have consisted of between three and four hundred families, men women and children, including some clergy, under a leader called Thomas, who is variously known as Knaye Thoma, Thomas of Cana, Thomas the Canaanite, Thomas Cannaneo or Thomas of Jerusalem. The story is given in concise form in a letter written by the Jacobite Mar Thoma IV in 1721 thus:

> From this date [i.e. St Thomas's death] the faithful diminished little by little in our country. At that time St Thomas appeared in a vision to the Metropolitan of the town of Edessa, and said to him: 'Wilt thou not help India?', and he also appeared to Abgar, King of Edessa, who was the king of the Syrians; and then by order of the king and the bishop three hundred and thirty-six families composed of children and grown-up people, clerics, men and women, came to India under the leade ship of Thomas the Canaanite, from Canaan, which is Jerusalem. All these sailed in the sea and entered Coringalore, our country. They inhabited it by special permission from the king Shiramon-Pirumal, who was ruling India at that time. All this took place in

A.D. 345. From that time the Church of our country spread in all directions, to the number of seventy-two churches.[1]

Another version, also from the eighteenth century, tells how the bishop who saw the vision told the Catholicos, who, after making it known to a large assembly, sent Thomas of Jerusalem, a merchant, to Malabar to investigate; how Thomas went and returned with a report of the state of the Christians there, and later went back to Malabar with a numerous company of people, including the bishop who saw the vision and some priests and deacons, and settled there; how they received certain privileges from the king of Malabar, inscribed on copper plates, and built a church and a town.[2] Elsewhere the bishop's name is given as Joseph of Edessa.[3]

The town built by the Syrian settlers is supposed to be the Christian quarter of Cranganore, which was called Mahadevarapatnam. To this day there is among the Syrian Christians a social distinction, which is said to have originated in this settlement between those who intermarried with Indians and those who did not. The former, called Northists (Vadakumbagar), are the more numerous, forming, it is said, 'the major portion of the Syrian community'; the latter, called Southists (Thekkumbagar,) are a small group, who claim, according to E. M. Philip, who was one of them, to be 'the direct lineal descendants of Thomas of Cana and his Syrian colony' and even profess to be able to give the name of the Syrian tribe to which each family belongs. They do not intermarry with the Northists. The popular explanation of the names is that originally the ancestors of the Northists lived in the northern portion of Mahadevarapatnam, and those of the Southists in the southern.[4]

No deeds on copper plates in the name of Thomas of Cana are now extant. There is some evidence to suggest that they may have been removed to Portugal in the sixteenth century; but there may be confusion between these and other copper plates.[5] Philip however claims that copies are preserved in some ancient families.[6]

[1] Mingana, p. 49. Note that this is a very late account. No early narrative has survived.
[2] Mingana, pp. 43-45.
[3] *ibid.*, citing S. Giamil: *Genuine Relationes.*
[4] E. M. Philip: *The Indian Church of St Thomas*, pp. 73-75.
[5] J. E. Keay: *History of the Syrian Church in India*, pp. 19-20.
[6] *op. cit.*, p. 71.

It would be rash to insist upon all the details of the story of Thomas the merchant as history. Nevertheless the main point,—the settlement in Malabar of a considerable colony of Syrians—,may well be true; and, granted this, it is not unnatural that there should have been a difference of practice among the settlers in the matter of intermarriage with Indians, leading to a permanent social distinction. The only doubt is whether the immigration ascribed to the fourth century has not been confused in the tradition with the later one of which we shall speak presently.[1]

The second immigration is dated in the year 823, when a number of Christians from Persia, including two bishops, came to Quilon in Travancore and settled there, having obtained from the local ruler grants of land and various other privileges. The eighteenth century Indian writer who tells the story of Thomas of Jerusalem and the Catholicos gives the following account of this:

> Then in the year 823 the Syrian Fathers, Mar Sapor and Mar Parūt (Piruz), with the illustrious Sabrisho, came to India and reached Kullam. They went to the king Shakirbirti, and asked from him a piece of land in which they could build a chur h for themselves and erect a town. He gave them the amount of land they desired, and they built a church and erected a town in the district of Kullam, to which Syrian bishops and Metropolitans used to come by order of the Catholicos who sent them.[2]

It is usually supposed that Sabrisho (or Marwan Sabriso) was a layman and a merchant, and that the other two 'Fathers' were bishops; but Mingana points out that Mar or Maran is the regular Syriac title of bishops, and concludes that he was a bishop and that he and Mar Sapor are one and the same person.[3] However this may be, the party came and settled in India at or near Quilon, and this time contemporary evidence is available in the form of five copper plates recording various grants to the

[1] See Mingana, pp. 44, 56-66. There seems to be some evidence suggesting that there was a bishop called Thomas Cana in the ninth century.

[2] Mingana, p. 45.

[3] *ibid.*, pp. 66, 76. There are several variations in the spelling of these names.

Christians. Three of these are at the Jacobite Seminary at Kottayam, and the other two in the keeping of the Mar Thoma Church at Tiruvalla. They are mostly written in Tamil-Malayalam, but two pages are in Pahlavi (Middle Persian) and Arabic, and four signatures have been noted in characters that look like Hebrew,—evidently of Jewish witnesses. The contents are obscure; but the gist seems to be a grant by the local ruler Ayyan Adigal of Venādu, with the concurrence of neighbouring authorities and the approval of the representative of his overlord, King Stanu Ravi Gupta, to the Tarisa[1] church and community established (or built) by Isodata Virai of Quilon, of a certain portion of land, of jurisdiction over the families living there, and of certain revenues and privileges. In some sections Maruwan Sapir Iso is mentioned as having received hereditary possession of the town and as being responsible for causing the above-mentioned families to render to the church the services appropriate to their castes, and as being ordered to pay to the church the price of certain properties.[2]

This inscription leaves a good deal to be desired in the matter of lucidity, and the only date mentioned in it, the fifth year of King Stanu Ravi Gupta, does not help much, even if it be true that this king is to be identified with Cheraman Perumal; for widely different estimates of the latter's dates are current, ranging from the fourth century to the ninth. But the mention of Maruwan Sapir Iso does definitely seem to connect the transactions recorded in these copper plates with the colony of Marwan Sabrisho. Various estimates of the date of this also have been made[3]; but the traditional date, 823, seems as good as any. The charters seem to imply the existence of a Christian community (the Tarisa church) before the arrival of the colonists, and dealings between it and them, and it would appear that the former community was very much strengthened by the influence of the new arrivals. Indeed both these settlers and those at Cranganore seem to have absorbed whatever Christian commu-

[1] Tarisa is said to mean orthodox.

[2] On these copper plates see Keay, pp. 24-26; Philip, pp. 57-58 (with photograph), 436-440 (translation, very obscure, reprinted from W. Logan: *Malabar*, vol. II); Brown, pp. 74-76, 85 ff.

[3] 992 (Assemani), 880 (Lequien), 823 (Malabar tradition). Mingana, p. 66. It may be noted that the so-called Quilon or Malabar era, used in inscriptions, dates from 824-825 and is said to be reckoned from the foundation of Quilon.

nities they found on the spot, so that later generations reckoned themselves as descendants of the Syrian colonists. According to Philip it was from the settlement of Thomas of Cana that the Malabar Christians were called Syrian.[1] Bishop Brown says that down to the present century Syrian Christians were officially reckoned as belonging either to Cranganore or to Quilon.[2]

There may well have been other occasions when Syrians or Persians came and settled in India, for the Syrians were great traders. Moreover refugees from persecution, by the Sassanian kings of Persia in the fourth and fifth centuries, by the Mohammedans in Persia in the seventh century and later, may well have found their way sometimes to this country, as the Parsees did. But the two principal influxes of Christians were those under Thomas of Cana in the fourth century and Marwan Sabrisho in the ninth, and apart from these Indian tradition has practically nothing to say about this period.

It remains to notice the inscriptions and monuments surviving from this period. Besides the copper plates of which we have just been speaking there is another one, a single plate $14\frac{3}{4}$ inches by 4 inches written in Tamil, now at the Old Seminary, Kottayam.[3] It relates to the Christian community at Cranganore, and records a grant made by a king called Vira Raghava Chakravarti to a certain Iravi Korttan of Mahadevarapatnam, described as 'the grand Chettiar of the Cheraman country', bestowing on him what is called Manigramam,—perhaps a title implying recognition as head of the Christian merchants of Cranganore. He receives besides this certain honorific privileges, two castes of the place to serve him and his community as slaves, and tolls and dues on all merchandise in Cranganore harbour and town, which rights are guaranteed to him and his heirs. The date is expressed in astronomical terms, according to the position of certain planets, and calculations made by two astronomers in Travancore have yielded the result 230 A.D. A. C. Burnell on the other hand, an English authority of the last century on Indian Palaeography, dated the inscription 774. It would certainly be surprising to find a Christian community of such standing in Cranganore before the arrival of Thomas of Cana and his building of Mahadevarapatnam. Perhaps, as Mingana suggests, the matter

[1] *op. cit.*, p. 73. [2] *op. cit.*, p. 65.

[3] Mingana, p. 75; Keay, p. 26; Philip, pp. 57-61, 431 f. (translation); Brown, p. 89.

requires further research. Nothing else is known of Iravi Korttan.

The monuments consist of five carved stone crosses which have been discovered in South India, the first at St Thomas's Mount, Mylapore, the others at Kottayam and some other places in Kerala. They are cut in relief on granite slabs, and are of generally similar design, a cross standing on a pedestal, surmounted by a descending dove, the whole enclosed by an arch containing an inscription in Pahlavi.[1] Except in one example, where part of the lettering is in Syriac (a quotation of Galatians VI, 14, 'Let me not glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ'), the inscription seems to be the same every time. It is difficult to read and interpret, because only the consonants are written, and it has given rise to some extraordinary interpretations, which may be seen in books written before 1928.[2] Since that year the interpretation of C. P. T. Winckworth has been generally accepted, which is: 'My Lord Christ, have mercy upon Afras, son of Chaharbukht the Syrian, who cut this' (or 'preserved this'). The crosses are dated in the seventh or eighth centuries by the palaeographers. They are solid evidence of a Church existing in South India at that time, at Mylapore as well as in Malabar, partly, at any rate, composed of Syrians, and connected with Persia.

[1] For illustrations see Philip, pp. 90, 136; Brown, p. 80. On the crosses, Keay, pp. 27-29; Mingana, pp. 73-74; Philip, pp. 90-94; Brown, pp. 79-80.

[2] e.g. J. Richter: *A History of Missions in India*, p. 32.

Chapter III

THE MIDDLE AGES

In the Persian dominions, as we have seen, the Church of the East suffered severe persecution in the fourth century, and for self-preservation was fain to cut itself off from Christians further west. In the fifth century it won the right to exist, but only as a tolerated minority, allowed considerable freedom of action in some respects, but in others subjected to restrictions, and always under the rule of a government professing a religion antagonistic to Christianity. The antagonism of the prevailing religion became more pronounced after the rise of Islam in the seventh century, when Mesopotamia and Persia passed under the rule of the Mohammedan Arabs. Those countries were destined to remain under Muslim rule for many centuries, during which time the position of the Christians worsened. Legally their status was that of a recognized minority, as it had been under the Persians, and at first there was a fair amount of toleration, although it was never left doubtful that in the eyes of the rulers they were an inferior sect, and the restrictions to which they were subject were tightened up; for instance they had to pay a special tax and wear a distinctive dress, they were forbidden to build new churches or call their congregations to worship by beating the wooden boards used in that country as bells, and it was forbidden on pain of death to convert a Muslim. Still up to the ninth century Christians, because of their superior education, were in demand for government offices and were able to exercise much influence. Yet there was always pressure against them, and defections to Islam were many. Later, in the Middle Ages, in consequence of the Crusades (religious wars undertaken by Europeans against the Muslim powers in Western Asia and Egypt), relations between Muslims and Christians deteriorated, and there was often persecution. The Church was increasingly weakened.

The adherents of the Church of the East in India and the parts of Asia outside the Muslim domination were not at first affected by these events. Indeed the expansion of that Church in Central Asia and the Far East, already begun in earlier times, went on vigorously throughout the early centuries of Muslim

rule.[1] The Middle Ages, especially the centuries from the eleventh to the fourteenth, were a time of eruption and movement among the Turkish and Mongolian peoples of Central Asia; hordes of them issued eastwards, southwards and westwards, conquering and devastating. In the eleventh century the Seljuk Turks invaded Persia and spread over the whole of Western Asia. In the thirteenth the Mongols, united by Chingis Khan, broke out and in an amazingly short time conquered a vast tract of country stretching from China through Central Asia to Russia. Among these peoples some were Christians, the majority heathens; in any case it was as enemies of the Muslims that they attacked Western Asia. The Turks accepted Islam. The Mongols, who sought the alliance of European powers against the Turks, for long wavered between Islam and Christianity. In the thirteenth century there was a real possibility that they might choose Christianity,—and what the effect would have been if they had chosen it is one of the great might-have-been's of history; but at the end of the century they too became Muslims, and the Christians, to whom their first coming had seemed to bring some relief, found themselves subjected to persecution. It was as a Muslim therefore that Timur (Tamerlane), the most bloodthirsty of them all, carried out his campaigns of devastation in the fifteenth century, in which the Christianity of China and Central Asia was utterly wiped out. North India suffered a fearful invasion by him in 1398, and whatever Christian communities may have been found in his path doubtless met the same fate. Therefore the Church of the East, which had once spread so widely over many parts of Asia, was reduced to a small and insignificant community in Mesopotamia with some outlying sections in a few places such as Malabar which had not felt the cataclysms of Turkish or Mongolian invasion that had overwhelmed the rest of Asia.

Such is the background of Asian Church History in the Middle Ages. To begin with we have a Church which, although a minority, is still vigorous and expanding; by the fifteenth century, partly by reason of gradual demoralization under Muslim rule and partly by reason of war and persecution, it has shrunk to a precarious remnant. Its plight was such that there were several

[1] On this see Mingana: *The Early Spread of Christianity in Central Asia and the Far East*, and L. E. Browne: *The Eclipse of Christianity in Asia*, chapter VII.

periods in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries when the office of Catholicos (and of Maphrian among the Jacobites) was left unfilled for years at a time. It is not hard to imagine that in such troubled times communications with the Christians of India would lapse. There seem to have been periods when the Indian Church was left to itself without bishops.

Apart from this important matter of communications with the mother-Church, the Indian Church, at any rate in South India, seems to have been less exposed to the vicissitudes of the age than the Christians elsewhere in Asia,—though in North India it may well have had its own troubles as Mohammedan rule became established there. But of its actual state and affairs very little indeed is known, and of that little hardly anything comes from Indian sources. The tradition of the Syrian Christians of Malabar is that during some part of the time between the ninth century and the sixteenth their community enjoyed a certain independence of the Hindu rajahs in that part of India. They are said,—in the tenth century according to Philip[1]—, to have had a king or ruler of their own, called Belliarte (Villiarvattam) at Udayamperur (Diamper), who ruled over the Christian community dispersed among the neighbouring Hindu States. It is also said that this ruling family continued for a long time until, on its becoming extinct, its powers passed to the Rajah of Cochin. Pope John XXII in a letter written in 1330 to the Christians of Malabar alludes to their 'lord' (Latin *dominus*), and in 1502 an embassy sent by them to the Portuguese produced a red rod with silver tips and three silver bells at one end, assumed to be the sceptre of their former kings.[2] The tradition of this 'kingdom' seems to be the only contribution from local sources to the history of the Malabar Syrians during this period. It is purely a secular tradition. Of their church life and any effort they may have made to spread Christianity among their Hindu neighbours or of any sufferings they may have been called upon to undergo for the Faith no record has survived. All we can say is that, when the community emerges into the light of day after the arrival of the Portuguese in India, the Christians appear as a fairly prosperous trading and landowning community, reckoned by the Hindus as equivalent to one of their higher castes, and affected in some matters by the customs of their non-

[1] *op. cit.*, p. 96.

[2] See below, p. 54.

Christian neighbours, as for example the observance of untouchability.

From the late thirteenth century onwards emissaries of the Western (i.e. Roman) Church and lay European travellers began to appear in India. The Crusades had brought Europe into closer contact with Asia than it had had for a long time previously since the old relations had been upset by the Muslim conquests, and some attempts by Western Europeans to preach the Faith in the East had already begun. Moreover the sudden growth of the Mongol power in the thirteenth century and its terrifying incursions even into Eastern Europe had thoroughly alarmed the leaders of the West. Further invasions seemed to be threatened; indeed they were prevented only by internal dissensions among the Mongols themselves. Accordingly it became an object of diplomacy to make contact with the Mongols, to find out as much as possible about them and by treaty or otherwise try and avert the danger. It was the Popes of Rome who took the lead in this enterprise. By this time the Popes were not only the heads of the Western Church in spiritual matters, but European statesmen as well; indeed they laid claim to a universal authority in matters both spiritual and temporal. It was in both capacities that they sent embassies to the Mongol Khans. Some of the missions were mainly political, others were religious, concerned, that is to say, with the spread of the Christian Faith among these barbarians. The men who were sent were Friars (Latin *Fratres*, 'brethren'), that is to say members of the mendicant Orders of *sannyasis* founded earlier in that same century by St Francis of Assisi and St Dominic; men vowed to poverty, celibacy and obedience, inured to hardship and ready to endure all things for the sake of Christ and his Church. From the time of St Francis himself some of them had undertaken missions to the non-Christian East. In 1252 Pope Innocent IV founded among them a Society of Wayfarers for Christ (*Societas Peregrinantium pro Christo*). They had need of all their faith and spirit of renunciation on their long and most arduous journeys from Europe into the heart of Asia and the furthest parts of China, among peoples utterly unknown to them.[1] Some of them came to, or passed through, India; and from their narratives we gain a few scraps of information about Christianity in this country.

[1] For the travels of these Friars as described by themselves see Christopher Dawson (ed.): *The Mongol Mission.*

John of Monte Corvino, a Franciscan who had already had some experience of Asia, was sent out by Pope Nicholas IV in 1289 with letters to several of the principal Mongol chiefs, of whom the most distant was Kublai, the Great Khan, who lived at Peking in China. He went first to Tabriz in north-west Persia west of the Caspian Sea, whence, having accomplished his mission to the Khan there, he set out in 1291 for China; and on this journey, because war was raging in Central Asia, he travelled by way of India. In a letter written after his arrival in China he says that he 'remained in the country of India, wherein stands the church of St Thomas the Apostle, for thirteen months, and in that region baptized in different places about one hundred persons', also that his travelling companion, a Dominican Friar called Nicholas of Pistoia, died in India and was buried in that same church. The rest of the letter, which is exceedingly interesting, is about his work in China; the short reference to India is mainly of interest because of its mention of a church of St Thomas, presumably at Mylapore. In another letter he says that he had seen a great part of India and made inquiries about the rest, and that it would be profitable to send Friars there to preach the Christian Faith; but unfortunately he was not moved to describe what he saw and heard of Christianity in this country.[1] He does however say in another place that there were some Christians and Jews in Malabar, and that 'the inhabitants persecute much the Christians and all who bear the Christian name.'[2] It does not look as if the Indian Church was in a very flourishing state at that time.

Another mission of Friars came to India in 1321. This consisted of four Franciscans, Thomas of Tolentino (an old man who had already seen missionary service in Asia), James of Padua, Peter of Siena and Demetrius of Tiflis, a lay brother from Georgia who acted as interpreter. These four were travelling to China as reinforcements for the promising mission that John of Monte Corvino had founded there; but they never reached China; instead they became martyrs in India. With them came a Dominican Friar, a Frenchman called Jordan (Jourdain

[1] These two letters may be seen in Dawson: *The Mongol Mission*, pp. 224-231; the one containing the reference to the church of St. Thomas is also in Kidd's *Documents*, III, pp. 161-163. There is also an earlier letter written in India, which I have not seen.

[2] I quote this from A. A. King: *The Rites of Eastern Christendom*, Vol. II, p. 429, who gives no reference.

Catalani de Severac), who seems to have been sent for work in India. They landed at Thana on Salsette Island at the head of Bombay harbour, where they found fifteen families of Nestorian Christians, who received them kindly. Leaving the four Franciscans here to await another ship which should take them further on their journey, Jordan set out northwards on the mainland towards Broach. Meanwhile tragic events were in progress at Thana. They arose quite unexpectedly out of a domestic quarrel between the man in whose house the Friars were staying and his wife. The man beat the wife, and she went and complained to the local magistrate (Cadi), a Mohammedan; for it appears that the authorities in that place were Muslims. The Cadi requiring witnesses, she cited the foreign Friars who were staying in the house, and Thomas, James and Demetrius the interpreter were sent for. The Cadi began asking them questions about their religion, and a debate developed in which he pressed them for their opinion of Mohammed. The Friars tried to avoid a direct answer; but, being pressed, Thomas was provoked into saying that in his opinion Mohammed was the son of perdition, and was in hell, whither his followers also were destined. At this the original case was forgotten and the enraged Mohammedans fell upon the blasphemers of the prophet. They were bound hand and foot and left exposed to the hot sun for six hours, after which they were to be subjected to ordeal by fire. The accounts say that it was James who was made to enter the fire, but that it left him unscathed, even when he was made to walk into it a second time without his clothes. Then they were expelled from the place, and, to make sure that they went, they were conveyed across the water to the mainland. But during that night they were pursued by armed men and put to death. Afterwards Peter, who had been left behind in the house, was also seized and tortured for two days, after which he was hanged in a tree and at last beheaded. So died the martyrs of Thana. The news overtook Jordan on his journey, and he returned about a week later, and was allowed to remove the remains of the martyrs to a place which he calls Sefa, where apparently there was a church, and bury them.[1]

[1] Friar Odoric's account of the martyrdoms, reprinted from Yule's *Cathay and the Way Thither*, is available in a small booklet, *The Martyrs of Thana*, published by the Catholic Truth Society of India, Tiruchirapalli. See also J. Foster's article, *The Four Martyrs of Thana*, 1321, in the *International Review of Missions*, April 1956.

Jordan continued in the same area for two and a half years longer, enduring much privation and persecution, but baptizing many persons. In a letter written early in 1324 he says:

> In the aforesaid city [Thana] and the circumjacent district I remain alone for two years and a half, going in and out, not having been held worthy to share the crown of my blessed associates. Who can tell all the adversity that I have suffered since then? I have been captured by pirates, imprisoned by the Saracens, accused, maligned, reproached, and exposed for a long time, like some buffoon, only in my shirt, and to this day I am deprived of the habit of my sacred order. Oh, what hunger, thirst, cold, heat, rage, maledictions, bodily infirmities, poverty, persecution, revilings on the part of false Christians, severity of climate, and innumerable other evils I have suffered. But what matters it? Greater still I am ready, even to death, to suffer for the sake of the meek Jesus. Also on account of my extreme poverty I continually suffer various bodily ailments. But this discord on my account among the people is most of all hateful. Yet I have happily baptized more than one hundred and thirty of both sexes.

After this he returned to Europe and reported on his mission and on the state of Christianity in India. Pope John XXII consecrated him Bishop of Quilon, and he set out again for India in 1330, bringing a letter from the Pope to the Syrian Christians and their ruler, who of course from the Roman point of view were schismatics, urging them to be reconciled through him to the Roman Church. We have no details of his later history; but from his earlier writings,—two letters and a short description of eastern lands, called *Mirabilia Descripta* (Marvels Described)—,we gather that his opinion of the Nestorian Christians was not flattering.

> In this India (he says) there is a scattered people, one here, another there, who call themselves Christians, but are not so, nor have they baptism, nor do they know anything about the faith: nay, they believe St Thomas the Great to be Christ.

It is evident that these Christians were very much neglected; but probably he is not referring to the main body of Syrians in Malabar. Jordan regarded it as his duty to convert Christians

as well as non-Christians to the Roman form of Christianity. He says that he and his helpers must have baptized ten thousand or more of both categories, and he is confident that, given only 'two or three hundred good friars, who could preach faithfully and fervently the Catholic faith', as many might be baptized every year.[1]

Another Franciscan who visited India on his way to China was Odoric of Pordenone. About 1324 he visited the place where the martyrs of Thana were buried, and, when he continued his journey, he took their bones with him, to be deposited eventually at Zaitun in China. Next he went to Quilon, where he found a Chinese ship homeward bound. After his return to Europe some six years later he dictated an account of his travels, including among other things the story of the martyrs. He says that it was ten days' journey from Malabar to another part of India where St Thomas the Apostle was buried, and he adds that, 'his church is filled with idols, and beside it are some fifteen houses of the Nestorians; that is to say, Christians, but vile and pestilent heretics.'[2]

About twenty-four years later another Franciscan, John de Marignolli, returning from China, whither he had been sent by Pope Benedict XII on an embassy to the Great Khan, called at Quilon, where he arrived on Palm Sunday 1348 and stayed a year and four months. Jordan, if he ever arrived, was no longer there; but Marignolli found a church of the Latin communion, possibly built in his time, dedicated to St George. It is thought to have been built by Venetian traders from Europe, who seem to have had some footing in Quilon at this period. Here he dwelt during his stay and 'taught the holy law'. Among his congregation may have been some of Jordan's converts. He also found Syrian Christians, of whom he says:

> Nor are the Saracens the proprietors of pepper, but the Christians of St Thomas. And these latter are the masters of the public weighing office, from which I derived as a perquisite of my office as Pope's legate, every month a hundred gold fanams, and a thousand when I left.[3]

[1] The quotations from Jordan are taken from J. N. Ogilvie: *The Apostles of India*, pp. 68-70.

[2] Medlycott, pp. 90-92.

[3] Brown, pp. 83-84. The quotation is from Yule's *Cathay*.

Here the Syrian Christians of Quilon appear as a prosperous community, and relations between them and Marignolli seem to have been cordial. Whether he actually ministered to them or not is not distinctly stated; but he may well have done. Before leaving India he paid a visit to the shrine of St Thomas at Mylapore, which he calls Mirapolis, in 1349. He speaks of a church which the apostle built with his own hands and another which he built with the agency of workmen, and he repeats a local tradition about a great tree-trunk cut down in Ceylon by St Thomas's order and floated to Mirapolis to be claimed by him there. It is regrettable however that he has so little to say about the contemporary life of the Church both there and in Malabar.[1]

John de Marignolli seems to have been the last of the Friars to visit India before the coming of the Portuguese; but there were lay travellers from Europe both before and after him. We have already mentioned in chapter I the most famous of them, Marco Polo. What he has to say entirely concerns the shrine of St Thomas. He says that both Christians and Muslims venerate it and make pilgrimages to it, that the Christians take red earth from there and apply it to people suffering from fever, who are cured thereby, and that the Christians who have charge of the church get their living from large coconut plantations. He also relates a local legend about the death of St Thomas, and describes a miracle which occurred at the shrine not long before his visit. Again we should be glad to exchange the legends for a little more information about the contemporary Christians. Marco Polo came to India on his way back from China in 1292 or 1293 and probably also on his outward voyage about four years earlier.[2]

We also mentioned Nicolo de Conti, who visited India some time between 1425 and 1430. His information too is almost entirely about the shrine of St Thomas at 'Malpuria', where he says it is venerated 'by heretics, who are called Nestorians, and inhabit this city to the number of a thousand'; but he adds, 'These Nestorians are scattered over all India, as the Jews among us',—a piece of information as valuable as it is vague. The picture it conjures up is of a minority community, long enough settled in the country to be reckoned indigenous and yet not entirely of it, scattered in various places and mostly engaged

[1] Medlycott, pp. 93-94, 125-126.
[2] *ibid.*, pp. 84-86.

in trade; perhaps not a bad picture of the reality.[1] Though the main concentration of Syrian Christians was doubtless in Malabar, it seems clear that in the Middle Ages there were smaller groups of Nestorians in other parts of India also, which have not survived into modern times.

Right at the end of the fifteenth century the history of the Indian Church begins to emerge out of the mists of uncertainty. From a Syriac source[2] we learn that in the year 1490 a deputation of two Indian Christians came to Mar Simeon, Patriarch of the East, and asked him to send bishops to their country, which had been without bishops 'for a long time'. The Patriarch ordained the two men, George and Joseph by name, priests, and sent them to the monastery of St Eugenius to choose from the monks two suitable candidates to be sent to India as bishops. They selected two, and these were duly consecrated by the Patriarch and given the names Mar Thomas and Mar John[3]; after which, having been furnished with letters patent sealed with his seal and dismissed with his blessing, they came to India with the two Indian priests. On their arrival:

> The faithful were greatly pleased with them, went to meet them joyfully with Gospel, Cross, thuribles and candles, and ushered them in with great pomp, with psalms and canticles. They consecrated altars and ordained many priests, because the Indians were for a long time without bishops.

After a short time Mar Thomas returned to the Patriarch to report, leaving Mar John in India. Meanwhile the Patriarch had died; it was his successor, Mar Elias, to whom Mar Thomas came.

This Patriarch, on hearing Mar Thomas's report, chose three more monks from the same monastery of St Eugenius, and ordained them bishops to be sent to India with the returning Mar Thomas. One of them, Mar Yahb Alaha, was consecrated Metropolitan, the others, Mar Jacob and Mar Dinha, bishops. This was in 1503. Then these four returned to India and joined

[1] Medlycott, p. 95.

[2] The document is translated in Mingana, pp. 36 ff.

[3] It is customary in the Syrian Church for a man to receive a new name on being ordained to the episcopate. Since it is a rule that bishops must be celibate, they are commonly chosen from among monks.

Mar John. A year later, that is in 1504, they wrote a letter to the Patriarch informing him of their arrival and of their doings. This is what they say:

> Now we would inform thy love that by the assistance of God, and through thy accepted prayers, we arrived in the blessed country of India in good health. . . . All the Christians of this side were greatly pleased with us, and our Father Mar John is still alive and hale and sends thee his greetings. There are here about thirty thousand families of Christians, our co-religionists, and they implore the Lord to grant thee a long life. They have begun to build new churches, are prosperous in every respect, and living in peace and security: May God be praised. As to the monastery of St Thomas the Apostle, some Christian men have gone into it, have inhabited it, and are now busy restoring it; it is distant about twenty-five days from the above-mentioned Christians; it is on the shores of the sea in a town called Mailapore, in the country of Silan, one of the Indian countries. The countries of India are very numerous and powerful, and their distance is about six months' journey. Each country has a special name by which it is known, and our country in which the Christians are found is called Malabar. It has about twenty towns, out of which three are renowned and powerful: Karangol [Cranganore], Pallur [Palayur], and Kullam [Quilon], with others that are near them. They contain Christians and churches, and are in the vicinity of the large and powerful city of Calicut, the inhabitants of which are idol-worshipping pagans.[1]

By the time these bishops reached India the Portuguese were there; the rest of the letter is about the arrival and doings of these 'Franks' (Parangis) and the bishops' own dealings with them, a subject to which we shall return presently.

It is evident from the two passages quoted that the coming of these five bishops brought about a revival of church life among the Christians of Malabar. For some years previously, —we have no means of telling just how long—,they seem to have been sufficiently prosperous in worldly affairs, but to have lacked bishops; and consequently, with no one to ordain fresh clergy

[1] Mingana, pp. 38-39. See also pp. 41-42 for another note written by Mar Jacob.

or exercise pastoral oversight over the churches and their ministry, their church life declined, until they themselves found it so unsatisfactory that they sent a deputation to Mesopotamia for bishops. When the new bishops arrived, there was general rejoicing; new churches were built, old ones were repaired, new clergy were ordained, and a church life of greater regularity and vigour was fostered. E. M. Philip, writing as a Jacobite, argues at length that it was only at this time that Nestorianism was introduced into the Malabar Church, and that from the sixth century until then it had in fact been Jacobite, owing allegiance to the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch, and that, if meanwhile it had accepted bishops from the Patriarch (or Catholicos) of the East, it had done so on the assumption that he was a deputy of the Patriarch of Antioch.[1] He is able to produce some evidence of Jacobite influence in India, and it is of course quite possible that some of the foreign Christians who migrated to India from time to time were Jacobites, and even that bishops may have been received who were Jacobites; the Malabar Church has shown a remarkable readiness to accept various kinds of bishops in times of necessity. But the evidence cited in this chapter and the previous chapter shows quite clearly that the Nestorian Church had a continuous existence in India throughout the period in question, and the most natural interpretation is that, whatever irregularities and anomalies may have occurred from time to time, it was to this Church that the Malabar Church belonged. In any case there is little to suggest that the doctrinal points at issue between the original Nestorians and Monophysites (or Jacobites) ever had much importance in the eyes of Indian Christians.

The bishops clearly went to Malabar and were occupied with the Church there, whose chief centres at that time were Cranganore, Palayur and Quilon. The community consisted of about thirty thousand families, living in prosperity and security. They say nothing of communities in other parts of the country, such as Thana, Kalyan or North India; nor do we hear again of ancient Christian communities in those parts. The definite reference to the monastery of St Thomas at Mylapore is interesting. Evidently it had been deserted or neglected; but now an effort was being made to revive it, presumably by Christians from Malabar. What had become of the local community of Nestorians, who

[1] *The Indian Church of St Thomas*, pp. 130-158.

had numbered about a thousand in the time of Nicolo de Conti some eighty years earlier, we do not know. Medlycott's translation of this passage, from the version of the bishops' letter given by the Latin writer Assemani, says nothing about a monastery, but simply mentions 'houses' of St Thomas.[1] If this were right, we should have to conclude that the whole settlement had been abandoned or destroyed. At any rate the picture of Indian Christianity with which we are left at the end of the Middle Ages is the familiar one of a community mainly concentrated in Malabar, with an outpost at Mylapore.

Of the further history of the five Nestorian bishops we know only that one of them, Mar Jacob, was still alive in 1549, when St Francis Xavier knew him. By that time he had served in India forty-five years and was a very old man. He seems to have been the last survivor of the five. As to the general state of the Syrian Christian community as the Portuguese found it in the sixteenth century we have the following description:

> The authority of the Syrian bishops extends to all temporal and spiritual matters. They are the natural judges of all civil and ecclesiastical causes within their diocese. The Pagan princes and judges have no concern with them, excepting only in criminal causes . . . Men walk armed, some with fusees of which they know perfectly the use, others with spears; but the greatest numbers carry only a naked sword in the right hand and a shield in the left. They are carefully instructed in the use of arms from their eighth to their twenty-fifth years, and are excellent hunters and warriors. The more Christians a Pagan prince has in his dominion, the more he is feared and esteemed. It is on this account as well as on that of their fidelity and strict attachment to truth in everything, that the princes cherish and countenance them so much. They are second in rank only to Brahmins. The Christians, pursuant to the laws of the country, are the protectors of silversmiths, brassfounders, carpenters and smiths. The Pagans who cultivate the palm trees form a militia under the Christians. If a Pagan of any of these classes should receive an insult, he has immediate recourse to the Christians, who procure a suitable satisfaction. The Christians depend directly on the Prince or his minister and

[1] Medlycott, p. 97.

> not on the provincial governors. If anything is demanded from them contrary to their privileges, the whole unite immediately for general defence. If a Pagan strike one of the Christians, he is put to death on the spot or forced himself to bear to the church of the place an offering of a gold or silver hand according to the quality of the person affronted. In order to preserve their nobility, the Christians never touch a person of inferior caste, not even a Nair . . . They are authorized to ride and travel on elephants. They sit in the presence of the king and his ministers, even on the same carpet,—a privilege granted to ambassadors only. The King of Paroor having wished during the last century to extend this privilege to the Nairs, the Christians declared war against him and obliged him to restore affairs to their former state.[1]

This is a remarkable picture of a strong and well organized community, commanding respect among its Hindu neighbours, managing its own affairs and able to assert its rights. We may recall also John de Marignolli's testimony from the fourteenth century that the Christians controlled the pepper trade and the public weighing office, and the charters recorded on the Syrian copper plates. All this suggests a proud and prosperous people, which had won for itself a good standing in society and was well able to look after its interests. Yet we also find it adopting a humbler role, as in the incident related by Philip of the funeral procession which the Rajah of Edappalli met on its way to the church at Niranam; the Syrians complained of the inconvenience of having to carry the body several miles to the church for burial, and the Rajah 'was so moved by their sufferings that he directed the party to bury the corpse on the very spot where he met them, and ordered the erection of a church there.'[2] They also applied to the Portuguese for protection, surrendering the sceptre of their former 'king'. It was after all a minority community, dependent on non-Christian princes, who from time to time

[1] This is quoted from Philip, pp. 421-423, who has it (by a roundabout way) from La Croze. I believe it comes from A. de Gouvea's *Jornada do Arcebispo de Goa etc.* (1609); but have not the means of verifying the reference. On the position of the Syrians in Malabar society see Brown, chapter VII.

[2] Philip, pp. 419-420.

might try to curtail its privileges. Ecclesiastically it was dependent on a foreign Patriarch and bishops from overseas; it had not developed either an ecclesiastical organization or an ecclesiastical language of its own. This was a great weakness whenever the connexion with Mesopotamia was interrupted. The Syrians were constantly in danger of being left as sheep not having a shepherd.

Such was the Syrian Church of Malabar at the end of the Middle Ages. With the coming of the Portuguese a new epoch in Indian Church History begins.

Chapter IV

THE PORTUGUESE: ST FRANCIS XAVIER

The second half of the fifteenth century is famous in the history of the world as the time of the great voyages of discovery undertaken by the maritime nations of Western Europe, which led to the founding of colonial empires in America, Africa and Asia. The pioneers in this enterprise were Spain and Portugal, and one of the motives behind it was the desire to find out a new route to India for the purpose of trade. The Portuguese after many voyages succeeded in rounding the Cape of Good Hope and began to sail up the east coast of Africa, and at length in 1498 Vasco da Gama, guided by an Arab pilot, reached India and landed near Calicut. Trade began, not without opposition from the former traders, the Arabs. Da Gama sailed back to Portugal in the following year, and thereafter, now that the route was known, fresh and larger fleets made the voyage to India every year. Trading stations were established along the west coast, and the Portuguese influence steadily grew. Later their ships passed on beyond India to Ceylon, Malacca, Indonesia and the Far East, and Portuguese stations were established throughout South-east Asia.

The Portuguese settlement however was not accomplished without violence and strife. In particular the Mohammedan Arabs, in whose hands the overseas trade with the West was at that time, opposed the newcomers and stirred up some of the Indian rajahs against them. Massacres took place, and were followed by reprisals, with the result that a bitter enmity grew up between the Portuguese and the Mohammedans; relations with the Hindus were usually better. Their object was profitable trade, not the possession of territory; but they were not content to trade merely as visitors; they sought to establish a permanent position for themselves in Asia. Thus their second governor, Albuquerque (1509-1515), deliberately set out to capture and command certain strategic places, not only in India but in other lands to the east and west also, where the Portuguese could be secure, and from which they could carry on their commercial enterprises without hindrance. It was in his time (in 1510) that Goa was captured from the Sultan of Bijapur, and Malacca (in Malaya) and Ormuz

(an island at the entrance of the Persian Gulf) were taken by the Portuguese. Goa was made the centre of administration and became the capital of all Portuguese settlements in Asia. Albuquerque built there a fine city. From Goa Portuguese stations extended northwards and southwards along the west coast (Damaun, Bassein, Salsette, Bombay, Cannanore, Cranganore, Cochin, Quilon and other places) and round to Tuticorin, Negapatam and Mylapore on the eastern side of India. After Goa the most considerable station was Cochin. All these were on the coast, and it was on the coast that Portuguese power was exercised; they made no attempt to get possession of the interior. Except in the territory of Goa, which was brought entirely under Portuguese government, the Hindu or Muslim rulers continued to rule, exposed more or less to Portuguese pressure. It was Albuquerque's policy to encourage mixed marriages between Portuguese and Indians. Large numbers of these took place, the women being first baptized, and thus a large Indo-Portuguese population grew up in the Portuguese stations, nominally Christian.

Though it was the hope of gain that brought the Portuguese adventurers to India, it was also the purpose of their kings to promote the spread of Christianity among those who came under their rule. On this ground several of the fifteenth century Popes granted them rights of dominion and commercial monopoly in the newly acquired territories. A modern reader will wonder what right the Popes had to do this; but in mediaeval Europe theologians held that the Pope, as Vicar of Christ, had a direct dominion over the kingdoms of the earth, and so such grants did not seem outrageous,—not to the beneficiaries at any rate. In a famous Bull of 1493 Pope Alexander VI, to settle rivalry between Spain and Portugal, the two colonial powers of those days, drew a line down the map of the Atlantic Ocean south of the Azores Islands to form a boundary between their respective spheres of influence. All lands not already under Christian rule 'discovered or yet to be discovered' to the west of the line, he assigned to Spain; those to the east, to Portugal. Along with this fantastic enactment went a command to the Spanish and Portuguese kings 'to send to the said lands and islands good men who fear God and are learned, skilled and expert, to instruct the inhabitants in the Catholic Faith and good morals'. Moreover, other foreigners were forbidden to enter those lands without

licence from these kings.[1] Whatever may be thought nowadays of such orders, the Spaniards and Portuguese were prepared to act on them; and not only in claiming and exercising, as far as they were able, rights of dominion and trade; they were seriously prepared also to propagate Christianity. The Portuguese fleets that came to India, therefore, contained, besides sailors and soldiers and merchants, priests and friars, not only as chaplains but for mission work as well. With the first fleet that arrived after Vasco da Gama's first landing,—that under Cabral in 1500—,came eight Franciscan Friars and eight secular priests; and others followed, for, as the Nestorian bishops say in their letter of 1504, 'they do not travel anywhere without priests'. As early as 1512 one of these Friars, Luis do Salvador, preached at Vijayanagar and was martyred there.[2] Thus along with the organizing of Portuguese administration in Goa went the building of churches, convents and charitable institutions, and in 1534 Goa was made the seat of a Portuguese bishop, who became the head of a regular ecclesiastical organization in India and beyond.

In consideration of the king of Portugal's zeal for the spread of the Faith Pope Leo X in 1514 granted to him and his successors the right of ecclesiastical patronage in the lands conquered or to be conquered in Africa and Asia. Thus arose the Portuguese 'padroado,'[3] or right of patronage, which was to play a prominent part in Indian Church History. The padroado means the right to present candidates to bishoprics and other ecclesiastical offices, and correspondingly an obligation to maintain, staff and equip churches and missions. When Goa was made a bishopric, and again when other bishoprics were founded later, the padroado was emphatically re-affirmed, the Bulls of foundation on each occasion stating that it was confirmed to the kings of Portugal in perpetuity, and might never be derogated without their consent.[4]

[1] See Kidd's *Documents*, III, pp. 225-228, and for an earlier Bull of Nicolas V (1454), *ibid.*, pp. 220-222. A Bull is an edict issued by the Pope.

[2] Achilles Meersman: *The Friars Minor in India* 1291-1941.

[3] Pronounced 'padrādo'.

[4] E. R. Hull: *Bombay Mission History*, I, p. 36. Along with the padroado proper the kings of Portugal proceeded to claim as inherent in their sovereignty another right, which the Popes had not granted and did not admit. This was the right to sanction, or not to sanction, the promulgation of papal Bulls in their dominions. They maintained that without the royal approval no papal document was of force within the sphere of their patronage. *ibid.*, p. 41.

Up to 1542 the mission priests were Franciscans, with some Dominicans. But the work of Christianizing was carried on as much under the auspices of the government as of the Church, and some of the methods were not above reproach, for example the baptisms mentioned above. Temples and mosques were destroyed and the public worship of Hindus and Muslims forbidden in the Portuguese settlements. Only Christians could hold public offices; converts might not be disinherited because of conversion, and they enjoyed the same privileges as the Portuguese.[1] Many converts were made, and by no means always by compulsion, but the prospect of coming under the protection of the powerful foreigners was a stronger inducement to many than the preaching of the Gospel, and it was frankly offered as such. A conspicuous example of this is the conversion of the Paravas, a caste of pearl-fishers on the south-east coast of India opposite to Ceylon. These humble folk were persuaded to ask for baptism by a convert employed by the Portuguese on secular business near Cape Comorin, who pointed out to them the advantages of Portuguese protection.[2] Their leaders having agreed, some Friars and priests were fetched from Cochin, and between 1535 and 1537 practically the whole caste was baptized, about 20,000 souls. They were then left without any Christian instruction or discipline, except that a few boys were taken to school at Goa; but their hopes of protection came true in 1538, when the Portuguese admiral attacked and defeated a fleet of Arabs, the former proprietors of the pearl-fisheries, who were harassing them.[3]

On their arrival in India the Portuguese of course met the Syrian Christians; if nothing else, the pepper trade, which was in the hands of the Christians, would have brought them in contact. Each side was pleased to find the other Christian, and at first relations were cordial. The Nestorian bishops in their letter already quoted describe with evident sympathy how 'the king of the Christians of the West, who are the Franks our brethren', had sent powerful ships to India only a few years before their own arrival, how a second and a third expedition

[1] On Portuguese policy see D. Ferroli; *The Jesuits in Malabar*, II, pp. 379-382.

[2] See this man's letter to the King of Portugal, quoted in Ferroli, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 140-142. His name was John da Cruz, and he wrote in 1537.

[3] J. Brodrick: *Saint Francis Xavier*, pp. 122-123.

had arrived, and how at the instigation of the Mohammedans there had been war between the 'Franks' and the Zamorin of Calicut, and how the 'General of the Franks' had built a fort and trading station at Cannanore. In all this their sympathies are obviously with their Christian brethren the 'Franks', and they go on to describe their own meeting with them in 1504:

> There were about twenty men from them in the town of Cannanore, when we arrived from the town of Ormuz to the Indian town of Cannanore; we went to them and told them that we were Christians, and narrated to them our story. They were pleased with us, and gave us beautiful garments, with twenty drachmas of gold; for the sake of Christ they honoured in an extraordinary way our state of being strangers. We remained with them two and a half months, and they ordered us one day to say mass.[1] They have prepared for themselves a beautiful place, like a chapel, and their priests say their mass in it every day, as is their custom. On the Sunday, therefore, of *Nusardail*,[2] after their priest had finished his mass, we also went and said mass, at which they were greatly pleased with us. After that we left them and went to our Christians, who were eight days distant from there.[3]

From the European side we have this description (1505):

> In this city [Quilon] we found some Christians of those of St Thomas, some of whom are merchants and they believe in Christ as we do .... These Christians keep Lent longer than we do, but they keep Easter like ourselves and they all observe the same solemnities as we do. But they say the Mass like the Greeks.[4]

Though this was written by an Italian, the bishops' experience shows that it may be taken as typical of the early Portuguese attitude.

[1] Mass is the Roman name for the Eucharist, or, as the Syrians call it, the Qurbana.

[2] The East Syrian name for the sixth Sunday after Trinity (or seventh after Pentecost).

[3] Mingana, p. 41.

[4] Ludovico di Varthema: *Travels*, quoted in A. A. King: *The Rites of Eastern Christendom*, II, p. 436; also Brown, pp. 84 f.

The Portuguese commander Cabral on his return to Europe in 1501 took with him, apparently at their own request, two Indian Christians, the brothers Matthias and Joseph. Matthias died in Portugal; but Joseph went on to Italy, and there gave an account of his travels and his country which was incorporated in a book of Voyages published at Venice in 1507.[1] He was the same Joseph who went on the deputation to the Patriarch of the East in 1490. He returned to India and continued to work as a priest at Cranganore. On Vasco da Gama's second arrival in India in 1502 a deputation of Syrian Christians came to him at Cochin and asked for the assistance and protection of the Portuguese. This was the occasion on which the Syrians handed over the silver-tipped 'Rod of Justice'. Da Gama promised what they asked.[2]

Relations were thus very friendly. A. A. King, a Roman Catholic writer, says, 'The Portuguese, in the early days of colonisation, treated the native Christians in all respects as coreligionists, hearing their confessions, giving them holy communion and lending churches for the celebration of the Syrian liturgy . . . Contemporary Portuguese writers are quite clear on this point, and the Jesuit Fr Maffei spoke of the Malabarese as "the faithful of Christ that still existed in that country".'[3]

It would have been well if the cordiality could have continued. But the Portuguese, like all West Europeans at that time,—when the Reformation had not yet happened, and there were no Protestants—, belonged to the Roman, or Western Catholic, Church and they had been brought up to believe that all true Christians must be in communion with the Pope (the Bishop of Rome), the Vicar or representative of Christ on earth, and conform themselves in doctrine and obedience to the Church of which he was the head; only such were the true Church; all others, though claiming the Christian name, were heretics. The Syrian Christians on the other hand were an Eastern Church, acknowledging as their head not the Pope but the Patriarch of the East, and following practices which at many points were different from those of the Roman Church. In the early days, when the Portuguese were new to India and, knowing no Malayalam or Syriac, were able

[1] On 'Joseph the Indian' see Ferroli, I, pp. 68, 82-84.

[2] Ferroli, *op. cit.*, I, p. 100 (quoting from Manuel Faria y Sousa: *Asia Portuguesa*, a 17th century work). See above p. 36.

[3] *op. cit.*, II, p. 437.

to communicate only imperfectly with the Syrians, and in any case were mostly laymen, the common profession of Christianity in a non-Christian country seems to have been more apparent to them than the differences. But as time passed and they got to know more about the Syrians, and their own position in India became more secure, and their ecclesiastical organization took shape, and above all after the bishopric of Goa had been established,[1] Portuguese churchmen began to be more conscious of the differences, and to make it their aim to enlighten the Syrians and bring them into conformity with their own, Western Catholic, ways. This activity developed fairly gradually, and did not at first cause any breach of friendliness. The aged Mar Jacob, for example, seems to have spent some of his declining years with the Franciscans in one of their friaries, and we find St Francis Xavier in a letter of 1549 not only commending him as 'dear to God on account of his virtue and holiness', but also adding that 'now in his all but decrepit old age he conforms himself most obediently to all the rites and customs of our holy mother the Roman Church.'[2] Later however there came a change, as we shall see.

Meanwhile about the year 1540 the situation was that the Portuguese had established themselves firmly on the west coast, with their centre at Goa and stations at Cranganore, Cochin and other places, and, except in the inland parts, had become the predominant power in that region. The Syrians continued as before, and their relations with the Portuguese were still friendly. Under Portuguese influence there had been many conversions to Christianity, resulting in a fairly large number of Indian and Indo-Portuguese Christians of rather unsatisfactory quality. It was at this stage that King John III of Portugal, always solicitous for the progress of the Faith in his rapidly expanding dominions, appealed to the Pope and the newly formed Society of Jesus for priests who should go to India. The first man to be chosen bears a famous name in the history of Christianity in Asia, St Francis Xavier (1506-1552). Here we must turn aside from the affairs of the Syrian Church to give an account of his mission.

Francis Xavier was a Spaniard, belonging to a noble family of Navarre, a little kingdom near the Pyrenees, and related to the

[1] Though the bishopric of Goa was created in 1534, the first bishop was no actually installed till 1539.

[2] Quoted in King, *op. cit.*, II, p. 434.

royal families of Navarre and France. As a young man of nineteen he went to the university of Paris, where he spent eleven years, first as student afterwards as teacher. Here he came under the influence of that remarkable man, also a Spaniard and also a member of the university, who afterwards became known as St Ignatius Loyola. Ignatius was an enthusiast with a singular power of attracting other men and persuading them to undertake a course of spiritual training for the service of God, which he had himself worked out on the basis of his own conversion and the spiritual struggles through which he had passed. This was the famous *Spiritual Exercises*, 'whereby to conquer oneself, and order one's life, without being influenced in one's decision by any inordinate affection', a title which well indicates the spirit of the man. They were designed to make a man what Ignatius was himself, a devotee utterly given up to the service of God and his Church with no thought of self. Francis Xavier was one of six young men who with Ignatius himself met together in a little chapel in Paris in 1534 and vowed themselves into a brotherhood. They pledged themselves to live in celibacy and poverty, and in the first place to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, where they would further decide, as then seemed best, whether to stay in Palestine as missionaries to the Turks or to return to Europe. If it should prove impossible to make the voyage to Palestine, they would go to Rome and place themselves at the disposal of the Pope as men 'prepared to preach the gospel anywhere in the world at his discretion, including the lands of the Turks and other tyrants hostile to the Christian name.'[1] In the event it was this latter course that they had to follow, for after travelling across Europe on foot to the port of Venice they were unable to find a ship to take them to Palestine. During the time of waiting at Venice they worked in the hospitals of the city, tending the sick and not considering any task, however menial or dirty, beneath them. It was here also that Francis and Ignatius were ordained priests. Finally, when there was no longer any hope of a passage to Palestine, they went to Rome, and, while they were there, they worked out rules for a more definite and organized society than the vague brotherhood they had hitherto been. These were submitted to the Pope, who after much hesitation approved them at last in 1540. Thus was born the Society of Jesus. It was to be a society of *sannyasi* priests

[1] J. Brodrick: *Saint Francis Xavier*, pp. 46-47.

living and working in the world, vowed to obedience. One of their number was to be elected as 'General'; once elected he was to hold office as head of the society for life; and every member was to be bound by vow to obey him absolutely. There was to be another vow of special obedience to the Pope, binding the members 'to undertake promptly and with alacrity whatever missions or tasks he might choose to assign them, no matter how distant or dangerous.'[1] The first General elected was Ignatius Loyola.

Already before the Society was officially constituted, the King of Portugal heard such reports of its members that he wrote to his ambassador in Rome, asking him to move the Pope to allow some of them to be sent to India. Eventually, after some changes of plan, it was decided that Francis Xavier should go. Another priest, Paul de Camerino, also volunteered; he was not at that time a Jesuit (that is a member of the Society of Jesus); but he afterwards joined the Society in India. They sailed from Lisbon, the capital of Portugal, in April 1541 in the fleet which was taking out a new Viceroy (De Sousa) to Goa. The King had interviewed them and commended them to the Viceroy; it was under royal patronage that they set out. Xavier also carried letters from the Pope appointing him Apostolic Nuncio (that is special messenger or ambassador of the Pope) to India and all other countries of the Indian Ocean. In the sixteenth century a fairly rapid voyage to India took from five to six months; but because of a late start and unfavourable winds Xavier's voyage took thirteen. This included a delay of six months at Mozambique (on the south-east coast of Africa) while waiting for the monsoon to change; and it would have taken longer still, if the Viceroy had not decided to go on from there in a small ship ahead of the fleet, taking Xavier with him. But mere length of time was a small part of the hardships of seafaring in those days. The overcrowding on board (there were about seven hundred people on his ship when it left Lisbon) and the impossibility of keeping food and water fresh on a long voyage led to much sickness; voyages were seldom accomplished without deaths, sometimes by the hundred.[2] There were

[1] Brodrick, *op. cit.*, p. 71. The full constitution was not elaborated till much later.

[2] For a catalogue of the hardships of a voyage to India by the Italian Jesuit Valignani, who sailed in 1574, see Brodrick, pp. 98-100.

plenty of sick people on Xavier's ship; he spent a great part of the voyage labouring sacrificially among them, not refusing even sweepers' work, ministering to the living, preparing the dying for death and burying the dead. By the time he landed at Goa on the 6th of May 1542, he was already reputed a saint.

Goa by this time contained a bishop, clergy, churches and a hospital. Only a year before an association of Portuguese gentlemen had been organized by a priest, Diogo de Borba, to care for the Goan Christians, and a school for non-European boys of various races had been founded, which, it was hoped, would develop into a seminary for training an Asian clergy; this became known as the College of St Paul.[1] But the prevailing spirit among the Portuguese was one of worldliness and loose-living, and the large numbers of Indo-Portuguese resulting from the mixed marriages and otherwise were ill-instructed and ill-disciplined. After paying his respects to the Bishop, Xavier devoted himself to visiting the sick in the hospital and the prisoners in the gaols and gathering together children and others in one of the churches for elementary Christian teaching. He would go about the streets ringing a bell and calling out, 'Faithful Christians, friends of Jesus Christ, send your sons and daughters, and your slaves of both sexes to the Holy Teaching, for he love of God'; and, says a contemporary,

> the novelty of the proceeding, never seen before in Goa, brought a large crowd around him which he then led to the church. He began by singing the lessons which he had rhymed and then made the children sing them, so that they might become the better fixed in their memories. Afterwards he expounded each point in the simplest way, using only such words as his young audience could readily understand.[2]

In this way about five months passed. Then at the instance of the Viceroy[3] he went to work among those Parava converts whom we have already mentioned, who lived on the south-east coast opposite to Ceylon. Taking with him three Indian Christian helpers, two of them deacons, the other in minor orders, he

[1] Brodrick, p. 125.

[2] Manuel Teixeira, quoted by Brodrick, p. 120.

[3] De Sousa, in an earlier term of service in India, was the admiral who rescued the Paravas from the Arabs.

travelled by sea to what is now the district of Tinnevelly, where he found the Paravas living in thirty villages between Cape Comorin and Tuticorin, Christian in name but entirely ignorant of the Faith and without church services of any kind. After making a rapid tour through the villages, during which he baptized all the unbaptized children and babies he could find, he arrived at Tuticorin, where he sat down to devise a plan of campaign. The method he determined to adopt was the one he had used in Goa; only here the language had to be Tamil, which he did not know and could not wait to study properly. In one of his letters he thus describes how he went to work:

> I sought out men who had an understanding of my Portuguese as well as of their own Tamil. Then, after many days and meetings, we got the prayers into Tamil, beginning with the manner of making the Sign of the Cross as a profession of faith that there exists one only God in three Divine Persons. After that we set forth the Creed, the Commandments, the Pater Noster [Lord's Prayer] the Ave Maria[1] the Salve Regina[1] and the Confiteor [Confession] in the same language. I then learned the translated formulae by heart and, taking a bell, went ringing it right through the town to collect as many children and adults as I could. Having gathered my audience, I held forth to them twice each day until, at the end of a month, they had learnt the prayers. I then arranged for the children to teach their fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers and neighbours the lessons which they had acquired at my school. On Sundays I assemble all the people, men and women, young and old, and get them to repeat the prayers in their own language . . . We begin with a profession of faith in the unity and trinity of God, I first saying he Creed in stentorian tones and then they all together in mighty chorus. That done I go through the Creed article by article . . . As they confess themselves to be Christians, I require them to tel me whether they firmly believe each and every one of the articles, and they reply in loud chorus, with their arms folded on their breasts in the form of a cross, that they do. . . . I give out the First Commandment which they repeat, and then we all say together, *Jesus Christ, Son of God, grant us grace to love Thee above all things.* When we have asked for this grace, we recite the Pater

[1] Hymns to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

> Noster together, and then cry with one accord, *Holy Mary, Mother of Jesus Christ, obtain for us grace from thy Son to enable us to keep the First Commandment.* Next we say an Ave Maria, and proceed in the same manner through each of the remaining nine Commandments... I require all of them to say the Confiteor, especially those about to be baptized, and then we have the Creed. I question the candidates individually about each several article to see whether they believe it firmly. If they reply that they do, I go on to explain to them the law of Christ which must be observed in order to save one's soul, and then I baptize them.[1]

It was a rough and ready method with obvious limitations; but it is easier to criticize it than to think of another that could have been put into use immediately. The really effective thing was the personality of the man. After four months in Tuticorin he began to make regular tours among the Christian villages repeating the same procedure and arranging for its continuance by appointing in each place one of the more intelligent members as catechist, and leaving copies of the course of instruction with those who could read. The catechists received a stipend from funds provided by the Portuguese government and administered by their agent at Tuticorin. Two European and two Goan priests joined him after his visit to Goa in 1543, and the busy work of touring, catechizing, baptizing, visiting the sick, dealing with offenders and helping the needy went on. Simple chapels of mud and thatch were built, and in these the missionaries, when they were present, or the catechists in their absence, gathered the people for the daily prayers and lessons. The people came willingly enough, for it was gratifying for the first time to be receiving pastoral care from the Church that had baptized them; but old habits were not easily cast off, and drunkenness, quarrels and various heathen practices often caused trouble. There were other troubles too, when Christians suffered ill-treatment at the hands of unscrupulous Portuguese, or were raided by the troops of warring rajahs. At one time Xavier was organizing relief expeditions to take foodstuffs by boat to Christians who had fled for their lives and taken refuge on some rocks out in the sea near Cape Comorin, while the Portuguese at Tuticorin were

[1] Quoted in Brodrick, pp. 141-142.

making money by supplying horses to their enemies. At another time he was journeying to Travancore and Cochin to see one of the belligerent maharajahs and try to make peace. On one of these journeys he baptized large numbers of another fisher caste in Travancore, called Mukkavars.[1] One of his assistants baptized another community in the island of Manaar.

At Cochin he learnt from a traveller that there were bright prospects for Christian work in Indonesia, where in a certain island two native rulers had been baptized and were asking for priests to instruct their people; and from then onwards his thoughts began to turn to lands beyond India. They were the more inclined to do this because he was disappointed with the state of affairs in India. He perceived how strongly entrenched the main body of Hindu society was, and how little inclined to respond to Christianity; and he could not disguise from himself the unsatisfactory character of the Christians among whom he had been working, or of the mixed race that was growing up in the Portuguese settlements; and he was continually being disgusted by the behaviour of the Portuguese, who, though nominally Christians, all too often lived as though their effective religion were a whole-hearted worship of mammon. Moreover it was not to India only that he had been sent; he was conscious of being Apostolic Nuncio and the pioneer of Jesuit missions throughout East Asia. Other helpers were arriving to carry on the work he had begun on what they called the Fishery Coast; one of them, Henry Henriques, was to work in that district for twenty-five years. For a time he waited in expectation of an opening in Ceylon. There was talk of a punitive expedition by the Portuguese against the rajah of Jaffna, who had been responsible for a massacre of the newly converted Christians in Manaar; and a brother of this rajah who had fled to India had made a promise, which Xavier evidently took seriously, that, if he were made king instead of his brother, he and all his subjects would become Christians. However nothing came of all this, and Xavier felt free to go. About the middle of 1545 he set out by ship from Mylapore for Malacca and the Indonesian islands.

He was absent from India for about two and a half years, from the middle of 1545 to January 1548, and his work in those countries does not concern us in this book. When he returned, he

[1] On the conversion of the Mukkavars see Valignani's narrative quoted in Ferroli, I, pp. 124-126.

was already dreaming of still more distant fields of work, for while at Malacca he had met a Japanese gentleman called Anjiro, who had told him much about his native land, where there were no Portuguese settlements and, he said, there would be a good response to the Christian message. Anjiro was brought to Goa and baptized by the Bishop in 1548, and Xavier planned to go with him to Japan. But first he had responsibilities to attend to in India. By this time a number of missionary Fathers had come out from Europe and were at work in various stations. Members of his own Society were coming in steadily increasing numbers,—three in 1545, nine in 1546, ten in 1548—,[1] gradually, as time went on, replacing the Franciscans. Xavier was in the position of leader, director and counsellor to these men; the chief appointments were made by the Provincial of the Society of Jesus in Portugal, but others, and the general oversight of the work of all the Fathers, were the responsibility of Xavier in India. His first care after despatching letters and reports to Europe was to revisit the Fishery Coast. He did this on several occasions during the fifteen months he spent in India, gathering all the workers together in a central place for fellowship and counsel, and receiving a great welcome from the people. On another such tour he went up to Bassein. Several of the new arrivals were assigned to the College of St Paul at Goa, which by this time contained about sixty students, boys and young men, of various nationalities, Indians, East Asians and even Africans, and was now handed over by its managers entirely to the Jesuits. Antonio Gomez, a brilliant but opinionated young man, had recently been sent out by the Provincial to be its rector. Other newcomers were appointed by Xavier to other stations, and for each place he appointed a superior and wrote out detailed instructions for the carrying on of the work and the conduct of the Fathers, instructions which show a blend of spiritual and worldly wisdom.

> First and foremost be mindful of yourself and of your relations with God and your conscience, because on these depend your power of being much use to your neighbour. Be quick and eager for lowly and obscure tasks, so that you may learn to be humble and ever to grow in humility ... Visit the poor in the Hospital, and exhort them to go to confession and Holy Communion, hearing them yourself

[1] Brodrick, p. 318.

when you can, and help them in their temporal needs also by putting in a good word for them with those in authority . . . Not all the poor are deserving, and cadgers are to be found among them sunk in vice and sin. The Brothers of Mercy[1] know these gentry well, so whatever alms you have to distribute, give them to the Brothers for people in real need. Another advantage of this is that when it becomes known that you have no help to give except spiritual, you will not be approached by those seeking only for money. . . .

Preach as often as you can . . . but eschew altogether in your sermons subjects of controversy and subtle theological questions. Be very clear, and teach the people what is right and what is wrong. Reprove vice, and show your sorrow that men should offend God and condemn themselves to the everlasting pains of Hell . . . (But) take particular care never in your sermons to denounce any man who holds a public charge, or there is a danger that such people may become worse instead of better if reprehended from the pulpit. The place to admonish them is privately in their own houses or in the confessional, when you have become friends with them. The better friends you are, the straighter you can talk.

He insists that the Jesuits must be tactful and give no offence in their dealings with the secular clergy and the Portuguese civil authorities:

You will defer to the Father Vicar in everything and obtain his permission to preach, hear confessions, and perform other sacred ministries, always striving to be his good friend and never for any reason breaking with him. . . . To the Captain you will be obedient . . . and you must stick by him too, even though you observe him to be up to mischief. When you and he have become friends, it will be time enough to express to him with great love, humility and gentleness the sorrow you feel that he should so soil his soul and his honour. . . .

In your dealings with all and sundry be pleasant and cheerful. Avoid stiffness and surliness, for a gloomy face will deter many from approaching you and profiting by your counsel.

[1] A charitable organization of the Portuguese.

> So, let your looks and words speak welcome to every comer, and if you have to admonish somebody, do it with love and graciously, giving no reason whatever for him to think that you find his company distasteful.[1]

Xavier had misgivings about the appointment of Antonio Gomez as rector of the College of St Paul; but it was not in his power to change it. All he could do was to arrange that the Jesuits in places other than Goa should have as their superior Paul de Camerino, his own original travelling companion. There was to be a division of authority; Gomez was to rule in the college, Paul elsewhere. Fr Paul was particularly instructed to do all he could to support and help those who were bearing the burden and heat of the day in far dis ant places in loneliness and hardship, answering their letters promptly and sympathetically, and sparing no trouble in procuring from the authorities and forwarding the supplies of which they were in need.

> Whenever these brothers of our Society . . . write to you, you must immediately set about their business with all diligence, and at any inconvenience, whether it be to request your interest with the Governor or the Bishop, whose assistance may possibly be necessary to them, or any other spiritual or temporal aid or relief which they may stand in need of . . . In writing to those who, amidst sufferings and exhaustion, are bearing the heat and burden of the day, be careful that you never blot the page with the smallest drop of bitterness.

[1] Quoted in Brodrick, pp. 332-337. In these instructions, written for Fr Gaspar Berze, appointed to Ormuz, Xavier has in mind the community professedly Christian in a Portuguese station. At times he was prepared to advocate more drastic methods of keeping backsliding Christians up to the mark. He had already written to the King of Portugal from Malacca in 1545 recommending that the Inquisition be set up in India 'to protect the Christian life of those who have been baptized into the Faith', because 'many nominal Christians, dispersed widely throughout the various fortresses, live openly as Jews or Mohammedans, without any fear of God or shame before men'. The Inquisition may be loosely described as a sort of ecclesiastical police, used for the suppression of heresy. In Spain and Portugal it was established and employed by the State, and it has earned an evil reputation because of its use of torture in the name of religion. Xavier's letter (Brodrick, pp. 239-240) makes clear that he was not aiming at the forcible conversion of non-Christians, but at the discipline of scandalous Christians untouched by the ordinary methods; nevertheless it is regrettable that such a man as he should advocate the use of such an instrument. The Inquisition was actually established at Goa in 1560, and continued till 1811.

> Let the accents of authority be expressed only in love and tenderness. Let no tinge or shadow of scolding, of bad feeling, or of anything which might wound or grieve them, ever enter your mind. Supply promptly, kindly, liberally, whatever they require, whether it be food, clothing, or anything for retaining or restoring health. For you must compassionate their great and continual labours both day and night in the service of God, unmitigated by earthly consolation.[1]

Though he left India, Xavier never forgot the work there or the men who were doing it.

These arrangements having been made, he set out in April 1549 for Japan with the Japanese convert Anjiro (now called Paul) and two Jesuits, Fr. Cosmas de Torres and Brother Juan Fernandez. Of their work there, of the Church they founded, how it increased greatly in the second half of the sixteenth century and in the following century produced many martyrs before being extinguished by persecution, and how in spite of this some traces of Christianity surviving underground were discovered in 1865, more than two hundred years later, this is not the place to write.[2] Xavier himself, burdened as he felt himself to be with 'the care of all the churches', returned to India early in 1552, having received on the way an order from Ignatius Loyola appointing him Provincial of the Society of Jesus in India and the East.

It was well that he did return, for in the two and three quarter years during which he had been away troubles had arisen. The difficult arrangement he had been constrained to make, dividing authority between Gomez and Paul de Camerino, had not worked. Paul had been quite unable to withstand the dominating personality of Gomez, who was imposing his schemes upon his unwilling colleagues in a very high-handed manner. At Goa he had emptied the College of St Paul of its students, and planned to turn it into a university for the sons of Portuguese families. At Cochin, where he planned to build another college, he had caused a church belonging to the Brothers of Mercy to be taken from them and given to the Jesuits. Though he had a following, such high-handed behaviour had aroused resentment among many,

[1] Quoted in J. N. Ogilvie: *The Apostles of India*, p. 106.

[2] On St Francis in Japan see Brodrick, chapters XIII-XV; on the subsequent history there D. Jenks: *Six Great Missionaries of the 16th and 17th Centuries*, chapter II.

Jesuits and others; even the Viceroy had protested against the action at the College of St Paul, and Gomez had resigned the rectorship. These events had unsettled the minds of the Jesuits in several places and had been bad for discipline. It fell to Xavier to restore order, and he did not shirk the distasteful task. He found it necessary to dismiss several men from the Society. To others whose conduct deserved censure he wrote 'speaking the truth in love'. Gaspar Berze was recalled from Ormuz and made rector of the College of St Paul and Vice-Provincial. Gomez was first relegated to a distant station in the island of Diu and afterwards he too was expelled from the Society.[1] The church at Cochin was restored to the Brothers of Mercy.

Three months were spent in this manner, and then, having set all to rights, Xavier left India once more on a journey which was to be his last. While in Japan he had been told of China as of a vast and venerable country to which the Japanese themselves owed their civilization, and on the return journey a merchant friend had told him how the emperor of China had forbidden foreigners to enter his country on pain of death or life imprisonment, and how certain Portuguese traders who had nevertheless gone there and been caught were in prison at Canton. Xavier became eager to go to China, and, if possible, to attempt the conversion of the emperor himself. The plan was that the merchant should get himself sent on an official embassy to the Chinese court to negotiate the release of the prisoners, and that Xavier should go with him. Thus he sailed from Goa in April 1552, leaving Berze as his deputy in charge of all the Society's affairs. But the plan of an embassy broke down through the obstruction of the Portuguese captain at Malacca, who controlled the shipping, a man who had a grudge against Xavier and his friend. Consequently, when Xavier succeeded in continuing his journey from there, it was as a private passenger in a ship of Portuguese smugglers, men very little in sympathy with his object. In spite of the Chinese government's ban an illicit trade was carried on from Sancian (Shang-chwan), an island six miles off the Chinese coast and about fifty miles south-east of the Canton River; here the Portuguese met Chinese traders from the mainland. To this place Xavier came, and while waiting there in the hope of finding some Chinese to accept the dangerous task of smuggling him into

[1] In a rather left-handed way, by a letter left with Berze to be delivered after Xavier's departure and after that year's fleet had sailed for Portugal.

Canton unknown to the authorities, he was taken ill and died, in a hut built for him by the sailors, on the 2nd of December 1552. His body, given a temporary burial on the island, was taken to Malacca by the Portuguese when the ships returned from Sancian, and was buried in the church there; but about five months later it was secretly exhumed by his friends and conveyed to Goa, its final resting place, where his shrine still is. He was canonized by Pope Gregory XV in 1622.[1]

Even after so summary an account of St Francis Xavier's work it comes as a shock to reflect that it was only ten years after his first landing in India that he died. During that time he was travelling constantly to and fro in conditions of great hardship from country to country, never remaining more than two or three years in any one area, always urged on by indomitable faith and hope of fresh nations to be won for Christ. He planted missions in India, in several islands of Indonesia and in Japan. It was an amazing career. Alike in pioneering zeal to spread the Faith and in far-seeing strategy thinking in terms of countries and nations rather than districts and villages, and in the untiring energy with which he threw himself into all that he did, he can be compared only with St Paul. And like St Paul he is known especially through his letters, voluminous letters revealing a singularly attractive personality and a love and care for his colleagues and converts worthy to be compared with St Paul's; only in theological depth does the comparison fail. Inevitably he was a man of his age, just as St Paul was; St Paul had no fault to find with slavery, nor St Francis with the Inquisition. He has been criticized for hasty and superficial methods, never stopping to learn a language or really get to know the culture of a people, trusting to memory work and verbal expressions of belief, and always ready to drop one piece of work and go in search of another. There certainly is an appearance of haste; but one and the same man could not be at the same time the pathfinder, carrying the Faith from country to country and opening up ways for others to follow, and the specialist missionary concentrating on one particular field and steeping himself in its way of life. It was the former role for which St Francis was cast. Language was a barrier to him as it never was to St Paul. St Paul could use Greek wherever he went, and be understood; but St Francis was never

[1] For the voyage to China and the burial etc., see Brodrick, pp. 454-455, 494-538.

in a country where he had a common language with the people; he was always dependent on interpreters, and never learnt more than a smattering of Asiatic languages. Many of those who continued after him, however, made good that deficiency. Among his contemporaries Juan Fernandez in Japan and Henry Henriques in India became competent in the languages of the people among whom they worked, and among the Jesuit missionnaries of the following century some were more than competent; they were expert. Moreover it must be remembered that he never left a field without making provision for the work begun there to be carried on, and that in fact it was carried on by a steadily increasing number of missionaries. That is why the Christians of the Fishery Coast have remained Christians to this day. It is as the forerunner of Jesuit missions throughout the East, and not as an isolated missionary, that he is to be judged. Not for nothing has he been called the Apostle of the Indies.

It was the Portuguese colonial empire and command of the sea that made such a career, and the development that followed, possible; and here there was loss as well as gain. As St Francis himself seems to have realized, and some of his successors felt still more keenly, Christianity imported from the West into India was compromised because of the Portuguese connexion. It became an affair of the Portuguese, the Indo-Portuguese and the multitudes of low caste Indians who became Christians largely for the sake of Portuguese protection. The more cultured classes were hardly touched at all; indeed they were alienated; Christianity was made to seem to them the religion of the Westerners and their hangers-on; and, in spite of all that has happened since, the impression thus formed in the Hindu mind is there still.

CHAPTER V

THE PORTUGUESE AND THE SYRIANS

WHEN the Portuguese first came to India and there met the Syrian Christians, relations were at first friendly. Each side was ready to accept the other as fellow-Christians. But before long, as mutual knowledge increased, it became more and more apparent that there were differences between them; and the Portuguese ecclesiastics, who were Western Catholics and believed, as all Western Christians then did, that the Roman Church was the only true form of the Church, its doctrines and practices the standard for all Christians and the Pope the universal *jagadguru*, could not help feeling that in many ways the Syrian customs were unsatisfactory and needed to be corrected. They conceived it to be their duty to try to bring these neglected Eastern Christians to a more satisfactory kind of Christian practice. Thus in the first half of the sixteenth century there began an attempt, where opportunity offered, to introduce among the Syrians the teachings of Western Catholicism and to encourage them to accept these and express them in their church life. Throughout the century the attempt went on, becoming, as time passed, more and more clearly a policy of bringing the entire Malabar Church into conformity with Western ways and under the government of Portuguese bishops. In this chapter and the next we shall be occupied with the history of this enterprise and the troubles to which it led.

Let us begin by taking a few examples of those differences between Roman and Syrian practice which were the cause of the Portuguese action.

1. First and foremost there was the question of ecclesiastical allegiance. Whereas the Portuguese acknowledged the Pope of Rome, not only as their own ecclesiastical head but as supreme bishop over all Christians on earth, the Syrians acknowledged as their head the Patriarch of the East and not the Pope. It was he who consecrated their bishops, who were not Indians but Syrians sent out from Mesopotamia. They regarded him with much more reverence than the Pope. Where the Portuguese prayed in the Liturgy for the Pope as their chief Pastor, the Syrians prayed for the Patriarch. This was the position when the Portuguese

arrived. Here, as they saw it, was a Church under allegiance to a heretical (that is a Nestorian) head.

As thus stated the situation is simple: the Portuguese are under the Pope, the Syrians are under the Patriarch, Pope and Patriarch are not in communion with each other. But in the second half of the sixteenth century a complication arose because of events in Mesopotamia, of which it will be convenient to say something here in advance. In 1551, when the Patriarch Simon VI died, a split occurred in the Nestorian Church over a dispute about the succession. For many years the Patriarchate had remained in one family, the succession passing from uncle to nephew, and in accordance with this custom his nephew, Simon VII, was chosen by a majority; but there was another party, including three bishops, who wished to break the custom. They refused to accept the election, chose a candidate of their own, John Sulaka, and consecrated him. Thus there came to be two 'Patriarchs', each with his following, and hence two communities. John Sulaka, wishing to establish himself against his rival, accepted a suggestion from certain Franciscans who were in the country that he should go to Rome and get himself recognized by the Pope.[1] At Rome he had to submit a profession of faith and acknowledge the Pope as his superior. Having done this he was re-consecrated bishop by three Roman bishops, and then Pope Julius III confirmed his appointment as Patriarch (1553). He then returned to Mesopotamia.

The effect of all this was that thenceforward there were two men calling themselves Patriarch of the East, one of them in communion with the Roman Church and recognized by the Pope, the other not. The one in communion with Rome is called the Chaldean Patriarch. He resided in the plains, at Mosul on the river Tigris. The other one, the Nestorian Patriarch, resided in the hills of Kurdistan to the north-east. Successors being consecrated to both men, the split continued. Patriarchs of both parties claimed jurisdiction over the Church of Malabar, and the Pope in confirming Sulaka had explicitly recognized his jurisdiction there.[2] Thus, if the Portuguese after 1553 continued to object to the Syrians' being subject to the Patriarch, they

[1] In the past there had occasionally been dealings between the Patriarchs and the Popes.

[2] Julius III: Bull *Divina Disponente Clementia*, 1553. I owe the reference to A. A. King: *The Rites of Eastern Christendom*, II, p. 439. He does not quote the Bull.

would be acting contrary to the Pope's decision, *if the Patriarch in question were the Chaldean one.* How far they knew of these affairs at the time, or distinguished between the two Patriarchs may be doubtful, and in any case the Syrians in India were willing to receive bishops from either. The point to be noted however is this: that, if the bishop were from the Chaldean Patriarch, he came to India as one already in communion with the Pope, and by accepting him the Syrian Church in Malabar became technically what is called a Uniat Church, that is an Eastern Church which by agreement has accepted the Pope's supremacy, but has been allowed to retain its own liturgy and customs.

Be this as it may, the Portuguese considered *themselves* the proper representatives of the Roman Church in India, and, as time went on, they aimed at bringing the Syrians under *their* jurisdiction. Consequently it became their policy to break the connexion of the Syrians with any Patriarch.

The first point of difference then was the Syrians' attachment to their Patriarch. Though they might be in communion with the Pope after 1553 through John Sulaka and his successors, yet their church order and customs were not those of the Western Church to which the Portuguese belonged. In the early days the Portuguese did not object; but later they did.

2. There were differences in the use of the Sacraments. The Portuguese, being Romans, reckoned seven Sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Ordination, Penance, Marriage and Unction. They alleged that the Syrians omitted Confirmation, meaning presumably by this that they had no rite of episcopal confirmation separated from Baptism by an interval of years. In fact the Syrians had Confirmation; but, being an Eastern Church, they followed the usual Eastern custom, which is that Confirmation is not distinguished from Baptism; it takes place immediately after the baptism in water, and is administered by the priest, who anoints the candidate with chrism (a mixture of oil and sweet-smelling substances) blessed by the bishop.[1]

[1] This was the common custom in the Early Church up to the fifth century, except that the bishop was present and himself administered the rite. After the vast growth of the Church had made it impossible for the bishop to be present at every baptism, the Eastern and Western Churches adopted different practices. In the East the priest was left to administer 'confirmation', using chrism consecrated by the bishop, whose connexion with the rite was thus retained. In some parts of the West too this method was followed in the 5th-7th centuries; but the

The name Confirmation is little used, nor is the rite reckoned a separate sacrament; but the thing itself is there. The Portuguese ecclesiastics must have known of the Eastern practice, and their allegation that the Syrians had no Confirmation may perhaps be understood as a repudiation of it. On the other hand there were times when the Syrians were left without bishops, when presumably the supply of chrism would fail. If this happened, the rite would have to lapse, and it would be literally true at such times that they lacked Confirmation. It seems that this did happen, and that unblessed coconut oil was used instead of chrism.[1] At any rate they seemed to the Portuguese to lack Confirmation.

There was also a difference in the use of Unction. The Portuguese, following the Roman custom, performed it only on the dying as a preparation for the life after death; but the Syrians, following the Eastern and primitive custom, performed it on sick persons for their recovery (as in James V 14).

3. In the Eucharist the manner of giving Communion to the people was different. The Syrian method is 'intinction', that is the Bread is placed in the Wine and the two are given together by means of a spoon; (the theory being that the breaking of the Bread symbolizes Christ's death, the mixture of the Bread and the Wine in the Cup the reunion of his life and body in the Resurrection; so that to receive the Body and Blood together is to receive the whole Christ, and to separate them would be as if to undo the Resurrection and crucify Christ again).[2] The Roman method, followed by the Portuguese, is that the celebrating priest receives the Bread and the Wine separately, but that all other communicants, whether clergy or laity, receive the Bread only and not the Cup; (the theory being that the whole Christ is present in each species, and therefore no loss is suffered by receiving one only).[3] This is the kind of difference which loses much

method that prevailed in the end was that the priest administered the Baptism with water only, and the rest of the rite was left to be performed by the bishop at some later time. Thus what had formerly been one combined rite fell apart into two, and it was only after this had happened that the name Confirmation came into use in the West to denote the second part. The Eastern practice is nearer to that of the Early Church than the Western.

[1] E. Tisserant: *Eastern Christianity in India*, pp. 51f.

[2] E. M. Philip: *The Indian Church of St Thomas*, p. 385.

[3] In origin the withholding of the Cup was probably only a matter of convenience in administration.

of its importance on being explained; but it is very obvious to the public eye, and without explanation it easily provokes misunderstanding and criticism.

4. Among the Syrians the parochial clergy were married, whereas the Portuguese held to the Roman rule of a celibate clergy. In this matter too the Syrians have followed the common custom of Eastern Churches, that the parish clergy are married and only monks are celibate; bishops also must be celibate, and are therefore chosen from among the monks. This has often been a subject of disagreement between Western and Eastern Christians; and so it was in India.

5. The Portuguese held the Roman doctrine of Purgatory, that after death the souls of the faithful go to a place where they suffer a painful purgation by fire, and only after a sufficient punishment are admitted to heaven. According to the Roman teaching, souls may be eased in, or delivered from, Purgatory by the prayers and offerings of the Church on earth. The Syrians had not this doctrine. They prayed for the faithful departed, but not with any idea of delivering them from torment. Here also they followed the usual custom of Eastern Churches, which is also that of the Early Church. Purgatory is purely a Roman doctrine. The Portuguese however regarded its absence as a defect.

6. The Portuguese in the Roman manner observed the custom of venerating images of our Lord, the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Saints; that is not of using them as aids to devotion merely, but of performing towards them acts suggestive of worship. The Syrians on the other hand did not practise this veneration. They had no images and made very little use of pictures in their churches, apart from the cross, and they certainly did not perform towards them acts suggestive of worship. In this matter they had adhered more faithfully to early Christian custom than some other Eastern Churches. The Portuguese however considered this also a defect.[1]

There were other differences too; but these will suffice for examples. It will be noticed that in most of the illustrations given the Syrians were really preserving Eastern or early customs, and could not in these matters be justly charged with heresy. But in the eyes of the Portuguese their practice appeared gravely

[1] On the religious conditions of the Syrians in the 16th century see Ferroli, I, pp. 176-178.

defective, so that it seemed to be a work of charity no less than of duty to try and wean them away from it, and get them to accept for their souls' good something more like the Western form of Christianity. Efforts to this end began quite early in the Portuguese period, and apparently without arousing resentment. As early as 1515, for example, 1200 'Nestorians' are said to have 'renounced their errors' in Quilon at the instance of the Dominican Fr Rodriguez.[1] After the establishment of the bishopric of Goa the efforts were intensified, and in the second half of the century confidence definitely broke down and an open struggle developed.

The chief scene of these attempts was the neighbourhood of Cranganore and Cochin. In the year 1541 Fr Vincent de Lagos, a Portuguese Franciscan, opened a school for Syrian boys at Cranganore. A few years later, at the instance of the first Bishop of Goa, John de Albuquerque, brother of the Viceroy of that name and himself a Franciscan, he turned it into a seminary for the training of young Syrian Christians for the priesthood. St Francis Xavier, who visited the place in 1545 and again in 1549, writes that in the latter year the seminary had a hundred students, drawn from the principal Christian families of some sixty villages of that neighbourhood; thus it would seem to have been a popular institution at that time. Yet it was quite clear that Fr Vincent's aim was to romanize his students. He taught them Latin and instructed them in the doctrine and ritual of the Roman Church, not of their own Church. They were not taught Syriac, the liturgical language of their own Church; nor were they allowed to wear Syrian dress. This unimaginative policy achieved only a limited success; for, although the work of introducing Roman ways among the Christians of those parts went on for some years in a manner which pleased the Franciscans, there came in the end a bishop of the Syrian Church who refused to ordain the men from the seminary, because they knew no Syriac and were too much westernized. Profiting by the experience gained in this experiment, the Jesuits, when they started their seminary at Vaipicota (south-east of Cranganore across the estuary) in 1581, were careful to teach Syriac and the Syriac liturgy, and to allow Syrian dress.[2]

Mar Abuna Jacob, the last survivor of the four Nestorian

[1] Tisserant, p. 32.

[2] Ferroli, I, p. 167. The Syriac course was introduced by Fr Francis Roz in 1584.

bishops who arrived in 1504 and were so active in reviving the Malabar Church, allied himself with the Portuguese,[1] and towards the end of his life seems to have conformed himself quite happily to Roman ways, as we have already seen; he presented no obstacle to the Portuguese, at any rate in his old age. After his death in 1549 there followed a period of six or seven years during which no successor came from Mesopotamia; the Syrians were left without a bishop of their own, and the only bishop in the country was the Portuguese one at Goa. From the Portuguese point of view this was a very convenient state of affairs. In those years the Franciscans in Cranganore made the most of their opportunity, and the work of westernizing went on apace, until to their chagrin it was slowed down by the unexpected arrival of a Nestorian bishop. Fr Ferdinand de Paz, who was in charge of the seminary in 1557, puts the matter succinctly in a letter he wrote to the King of Portugal in that year. He says that he has not himself seen the Syrian churches in the interior, but:

> We have already succeeded in making our own [Christians] forget their beliefs and accept those of the Roman Church; but due to the unhappy arrival of this bishop they have begun to cool down.[2]

Probably this bishop was an undiluted Nestorian sent by the Nestorian Patriarch; but already another one sent by the Chaldean Patriarch had arrived in India, though not yet in Malabar. By this time the split in the Nestorian Church had occurred, and there were two Patriarchs, one of whom was in communion with Rome and recognized by the Pope. It was this one, Abdisho, the immediate successor of John Sulaka, who in 1555 consecrated and sent to India Mar Joseph, who was actually Sulaka's brother. Mar Joseph therefore, who arrived in India in 1556, came as a bishop in communion with the Pope and having authority which the Pope had recognized; yet in church order he was an Eastern and not a Western,—a combination which the Portuguese found hard to appreciate. He was accompanied by another Mesopotamian bishop, Mar Elias, and by two Maltese Dominicans, Bishop Ambrose Buttigeg and Fr Antony Zahara, whom the Pope had deputed to assist Patriarch Abdisho. In spite of this

[1] See his letters to King John III of Portugal quoted in Ferroli, I, pp. 110-113.

[2] A. Meersman: *The Friars Minor or Franciscans in India*, p. 71.

papal backing however the Portuguese, who were in fact beginning to claim jurisdiction over all Christians in India by virtue of the padroado, resented his coming, and were not disposed to let any of the party go to Malabar. The two Dominicans were detained at Goa, and the two Syrian bishops were confined in the Franciscan friary at Bassein, whose Guardian, though he admired their piety, impressed on them that they could not work in India without the permission of the Bishop of Goa. Here they were taught Latin, and learnt to say Mass according to the Latin rite. After eighteen months they were at length allowed to go to Malabar (1558), apparently to counteract the influence of the Nestorian bishop mentioned by Fr de Paz. Mar Elias soon returned to Mesopotamia. Mar Joseph, accompanied by Bishop Buttigeg (who died shortly afterwards) and Fr Zahara, proceeded to Cochin and thence to the Syrian churches inland. They introduced certain Roman customs, such as confession, confirmation and extreme unction, which the Syrians do not seem to have opposed. The Nestorian bishop was persuaded to withdraw.

But it was Mar Joseph who refused to ordain students from the Franciscan seminary. Moreover the Jesuits in Malabar found fault with his teaching. It was reported that he had said that the Blessed Virgin Mary might be called Mother of Christ, but not Mother of God (the very point on which the Nestorian controversy of the fifth century had broken out), and that he had called the use of images idolatry and said that confession was not essential. After the Pope had recalled his companion, Fr Zahara, he was arrested, brought to Goa and from there deported by sea to Portugal *en route* for Rome. In Portugal however he made a good impression, and was able both to win the favour of the Queen and the Regent (Cardinal Henriques) and to satisfy the authorities as to his teaching and policy, so that they sent him back to India without sending him to Rome.[1] Entering Malabar a second time he tried to conciliate the Portuguese by introducing romanizing changes into the Syrian services.

[1] A Brief was obtained from Pope Pius IV telling him to go back to Malabar according to the Regent's instructions. The date of this Brief, as given by Fr Ferroli and Cardinal Tisserant, 27th June 1564, makes the chronology difficult, if Mar Joseph and Mar Abraham (see below) were in India together before the latter left for Europe; for other letters of Pius IV written in February 1565 show that Mar Abraham was already in Rome by then. See Ferroli, I, p. 162; Tisserant, p. 39. It would be easier if we might suppose that Mar Joseph returned in 1563, or else that Mar Abraham left India before he returned.

He is said to have introduced the wearing of Roman liturgical vestments and the use of wafers and fermented wine—'for before that they had consecrated lumps kneaded with oil and salt and sweet wine squeezed from moistened raisins.'[1] The Portuguese in India could not but acknowledge him; but they still distrusted him. Within two or three years fresh accusations of heresy were brought against him; he was again arrested and once more deported to Europe. This time he reached Rome, where he succeeded in convincing his judges of his orthodoxy; but while still there he died (1569).

Meanwhile during Mar Joseph's first absence from India the Syrians in Malabar had sent to Mesopotamia for another bishop, for no one expected him to return. Evidently it was to the Nestorian Patriarch (Simeon), not to the Chaldean one (Abdisho), that the request came, and thus the bishop who was sent was a genuine Nestorian not in communion with Rome.[2] This was Mar Abraham. Though the Portuguese were on the watch, he reached Malabar in disguise and began to function. Then Mar Joseph returned (according to the usual version), and with two rival bishops claiming the Syrians' allegiance dissensions began. Little as they trusted Mar Joseph, the Portuguese were bound to take his part. They arrested Mar Abraham and shipped him off for Europe on a voyage that was to prove adventurous. While the ship was at Mozambique, he escaped, and from there managed to make his way to Mesopotamia, where he transferred his allegiance to the Chaldean Patriarch and was by him re-consecrated. To make his position stronger he then went to Rome, hoping for confirmation of his appointment and support against the Portuguese. Pope Pius IV, besides requiring of him a profession of faith, found that his previous ordination was defective and caused him to be ordained afresh to all orders of the ministry up to the priesthood; which done, he was consecrated anew as Archbishop of Angamāli, a place in the Malabar ghats east of Cranganore, at that time the headquarters of the Syrian diocese. Then in 1565, fortified by all these re-ordinations, he set out on his return journey to India via Mesopotamia with letters from the Pope to the Archbishop of Goa and the

[1] *Oriente Conquistado*, I, 86, quoted in King, *op. cit.*, II, p. 440.

[2] But some say that he was sent by the Chaldean Patriarch, e.g., Tisserant, p. 40; Ferroli, I, p. 162. Bishop Brown agrees that the other interpretation makes better sense of the subsequent events. *The Indian Christians of St Thomas*, p. 22.

Bishop of Cochin,[1] dated 28th February 1565, to the effect that he was to be accepted and protected and allowed to function, so long as he remained faithful to his profession of faith and obedience to the Holy See. 'For', wrote the Pope, 'we wish and desire him to hold without any impediment that diocese which his patriarch assigned to him.' He also carried a letter to the Patriarch expressing the Pope's regret over the troubles that had occurred in India, and advising the Patriarch to divide the Syrian diocese between Mar Abraham and Mar Joseph. In this letter, dated 23rd February 1565, after exhorting the Patriarch to see that his people agree in faith with the Roman Church, the Pope definitely recognizes the rites and ceremonies of the East Syrian Church, if ancient, subject to agreement with Rome in essentials. The words are:

> as regards rites and ceremonies . . ., although it is to be desired that they too agree, still we would permit you to retain the customs and the old rites, which of course can be proved (to be legitimate), provided in sacraments and other things pertaining to faith and necessary to salvation you follow, as we said, the Roman Church.[2]

It is thus clear that the Pope was prepared to recognize the Church in Malabar as a diocese of the Uniat East Syrian (or Chaldean) Church, and to uphold Mar Abraham. Not so the Portuguese. When Mar Abraham arrived at Goa on his return to India (1567?), the Archbishop and the Viceroy refused to accept his documents as genuine, and he was told that he must remain in the Dominican convent until they could be verified by fresh letters from Rome. However Mar Abraham, with his usual resourcefulness, gave his custodians the slip once more, got safely to Malabar and entered upon his office. It seems that Mar Joseph had already been removed by this time.

Thereafter Mar Abraham continued in office for thirty years, until his death in 1597. He began by re-ordaining the clergy he had formerly ordained. He seems to have made a genuine attempt to fulfil the role assigned to him as bishop of an Eastern

[1] Goa had been made an archdiocese in 1557 with Cochin as a suffragan see.

[2] I take these quotations from King, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 443 f. The letters, which are in the Vatican archives, were published by Samuel Giamil in *Genuinae Relationes Inter Sedem Apostolicam et Chaldaeorum Ecclesiam* (1902). Giamil was procurator of the (Uniat) Chaldean Patriarch at Rome.

Church acknowledging the Pope but entitled to retain its own customs; but this was a conception with which the Portuguese had little sympathy; their aim was to bring the Malabar Syrians effectively under the padroado. Consequently he was in a very difficult position. From the first they regarded him with suspicion and sought to bring pressure to bear on him; and they were more powerful than he. On the other hand their power did not extend inland from the coast. By remaining inland as much as possible and combining compliance with evasion he was able to resist their pressure with a fair measure of success. He was no simpleton, and his previous experience of Portuguese methods in India and of the papal Curia at Rome stood him in good stead.

Suspecting that an invitation to the second provincial synod of Goa in 1575 was a device of the Goan authorities to bring him within their reach, and not wishing to fall into their hands again, he declined to attend. This synod showed its mind by requesting the Pope that in future bishops for the Malabar Syrians might be appointed by the King of Portugal and not by the Chaldean Patriarch, or at least that they should be required to attend the Goan provincial synod. Mar Abraham, when he heard of this, began a correspondence with Pope Gregory XIII professing his entire loyalty, but complaining of the Portuguese attitude towards him and protesting that it was not safe to attend their synods without a papal guarantee of protection. The Pope wrote to Goa and to the King of Portugal about his complaints; but told him that he should attend the Goan Synod, and promised him safe-conduct. At this period relations between Mar Abraham and the Jesuits in Malabar were friendly; it was in his time that they established their residence (1577) and seminary at Vaipicota (Chennamangalam).

When, about 1579, a Nestorian bishop from Mesopotamia once more appeared in India, Mar Abraham sought, and received, Portuguese support against him on the ground that the intruder, Mar Simeon, was opposed to the Roman Church. Mar Simeon was arrested and deported to Europe, where he was not upheld by Rome, and he ended his days in internment in Portugal.

Mar Abraham was present, under a papal safe-conduct, at the third provincial synod of Goa in 1585, when a whole session was devoted to the Syrian diocese, and was obliged to assent to a series of canons, some of which must have been highly unwelcome to him. The synod laid it down that Syrian candidates for the priesthood were not to be ordained without the permission

of the Bishop of Cochin, and that their appointment to churches should be in the hands of the Portuguese. The opinion expressed at the previous synod was repeated, that bishops for the Malabar Syrians should be appointed by the King of Portugal and consecrated at Goa. The Roman service books were to be translated into Syriac. And finally Mar Abraham was to be provided with an adviser, the Jesuit Fr Francis Roz, to help him to carry out the synod's decisions, including the examination and correction of the Syriac books in use in the churches. To these and other decisions Mar Abraham put his signature. Whether he fully understood all the details or not, he could not mistake the general intention, which was to bring the Malabar Church and its bishop under Portuguese control. From that time relations between Mar Abraham and the Portuguese deteriorated. He determined to co-operate with them as little as possible, and showed no willingness to carry out the synod's decisions. To Fr. Roz it seemed that he was relapsing into Nestorianism. The church books were not handed in for correction, and when Roz examined some of them privately, he found the names of Nestorius and other teachers of that school still there in the liturgy. Fr. Roz drew up a treatise late in 1586 or early in 1587, *On the Errors of the Nestorians*, in which he definitely accused Mar Abraham of heresy. Mar Abraham for his part refused to ordain students of the Jesuit seminary by the Latin rite in 1590, and, when the fourth provincial synod of Goa was to be held, he refused to go. All these things having been reported to Rome, Pope Clement VIII in 1595 ordered the Archbishop of Goa to summon Mar Abraham to Goa, investigate fully the charges against him, and, in the event of his being found guilty, keep him in custody until further orders. But Mar Abraham, who fell seriously ill in that year and thereafter was in a very weak state of health until his death a couple of years later, was never brought to trial. He died early in 1597, leaving the administration of his diocese in the hands of his archdeacon, George, a young Indian of the Pakalomattam family, from which St Thomas is said to have ordained presbyters.[1]

The newly appointed Archbishop of Goa to whom these papal Briefs were addressed was Alexis de Menezes, who arrived in India in 1595, an able and resolute man of commanding personality and in the prime of life, one moreover who had come out

[1] On Mar Joseph and Mar Abraham see Ferroli, I, pp. 152-176; Tisserant, pp. 35-47; Brown, pp. 20-26.

with a very clear notion of the responsibility of the Roman Church in its Portuguese form for the ecclesiastical affairs of Asia, and with little knowledge of or sympathy with Eastern forms of Christianity. To such a man the existence in Malabar of a Church not directly subject to the Portuguese hierarchy and not conforming in practice to Western Catholicism was simply an anomaly, whatever the relations of East Syrian ecclesiastics with the Pope might be. Consequently, on the death of Mar Abraham, he decided that the time had now come when the policy of drawing the Syrian Christians away from their ancient customs and attaching them to the Western Church must be pursued with greater vigour.

It had long been the opinion of the Portuguese clergy in India that the chief obstacle to that policy was the coming of Syrian bishops from Mesopotamia. The work had been going on very nicely, so it seemed to them, in the last years of Mar Abuna Jacob and the interregnum after his death; but Mar Joseph and Mar Abraham had delayed it. Now at last Mar Abraham was dead after his long episcopate of over thirty years, and once more the Syrians were without a bishop. Menezes determined that no successor should arrive from Mesopotamia. It was easy to bring this about, since the Portuguese had control of the shipping. Orders were given again to watch the ports, and though the Syrians sent messages to the Patriarch and attempts were made to send them a bishop, no one was able to get through even in disguise. Thus Menezes was left with a clear field in India.

His aim, as he wrote to a dignitary in Rome in December 1597, was to get a Jesuit appointed as bishop of the Syrian diocese, and then

> ... to purify all the churches from the heresy and errors which they hold, giving them the pure doctrine of the Catholic faith, taking from them all the heretical books that they possess .... I humbly suggest that he be instructed to extinguish little by little the Syrian language, which is not natural. His priests should learn the Latin language, because the Syriac language is a channel through which all that heresy flows. A good administrator ought to replace Syriac by Latin. What is most important of all is that the bishop be a suffragan of this city [Goa], as is at present the bishop of Cochin, his near neighbour.[1]

[1] Quoted in King, II, pp. 449 f. Menezes himself cannot have known much about the contents of the books. He seems throughout to have given the Syrians credit for more Nestorianism than they actually possessed. Anything non-Latin was apt to appear Nestorian to him.

The appointment of a bishop for the Syrians was not in his power; but he had a candidate in mind already, the Jesuit Fr Francis Roz, an experienced man with a knowledge of both Syriac and Malayalam. Menezes' first thought on hearing of Mar Abraham's death was to put Fr. Roz in for the time being as administrator. He was persuaded to abandon this idea however by the Portuguese authorities at Goa, who thought that too much resentment would be aroused among the Syrians if a Jesuit were put in over the head of their own archdeacon. The Syrians indeed were showing signs of discontent. As Menezes says further in the letter quoted above, a meeting of clergy and laity held among them declared that if a Syrian bishop were sent to them, they would obey him, but if a Latin one, 'they would consider what course they would adopt'. The proposal was changed, and Menezes wrote to George, the archdeacon, offering the post to him on condition that he signed a profession of faith and accepted Fr. Roz and the rector of the Jesuit seminary as his colleagues. George, who was already authorized by Mar Abraham and already in charge, refused, and continued to refuse when Menezes modified his proposal by leaving out of it the two Jesuits. He received support from his people, and in the indignation aroused by these negotiations some Latin priests who happened to be visiting Syrian villages were driven out. Menezes however continued the correspondence, and George, who was no match for him, began to give way. He put off the signing of the profession as long as he could, but was eventually prevailed upon to come to the Franciscans' church at Vaipin, near Cochin, and sign.[1] No sooner had he returned to his own place however than he began to make excuses to his followers and to explain his signature away. Menezes realized that he was not to be relied upon.

Then Menezes took a bold and momentous decision. He resolved to go to Malabar himself and take charge of the Syrian diocese. He evidently considered himself entitled to do this, the see of Angamāli being vacant, by virtue of his position as Archbishop of Goa and 'Primate of the Indies', the ecclesiastical head of all Christians in the Portuguese territories, who had been charged moreover by the Pope with the duty of inquiring into the accusations against the late bishop of the Syrians and

[1] The profession was that known as the Tridentine profession of faith, of the creed of Pope Pius IV, drawn up after the Council of Trent. See below, p. 89.

of making temporary arrangements for the administration of the diocese meanwhile. Nevertheless it was an act of usurpation such as no one had contemplated before. Even the Portuguese in Goa, fearing the possible consequences, advised him against it. He refused to be turned aside however, because he was determined to bring this Syrian question to an end, and could see no other way of doing it.

Having embarked at Goa in the last few days of 1598, he arrived with his retinue at Cochin on the 26th January 1599. After making known the object of his visit and endeavouring with the help of a large sum of money to quieten the apprehensions of the rajah, the most considerable of all the rulers in that part of Malabar and an ally of the Portuguese, he sent a message to the archdeacon inviting him to come and meet him. George and his followers were alarmed at the turn events had taken; but it seemed prudent not to oppose the archbishop's plans openly but to make a show of compliance, at least letting him visit churches, celebrate Mass and preach, in the hope that he would sooner or later go away again, and that eventually a bishop of their own would again come from Mesopotamia. There was much excitement however, and when George after some hesitation did present himself at Cochin with some of his clergy, they were accompanied by 3000 armed men. At the interview it was settled that Vaipicota should be the first place visited; George and his followers agreed to meet the archbishop there. Next day Menezes proceeded to the place, accompanied by several boatloads of Portuguese,—for much of the travelling during his tour was by boat along the backwaters. From the seminary he went in procession to the church, followed by a crowd of curious and admiring people, to whom he preached his first sermon in Malabar. It was on John X:1, and the substance was that the Roman Church was the only true door into the sheepfold, and that the Patriarchs were as thieves and robbers who climbed up some other way. After this he called upon the people to come to the church on the following day to be confirmed,—which they did. After the Confirmation he celebrated Mass. The archdeacon and his party did not appear until all this was over. Menezes, without commenting on their lateness, mentioned to George his further plans, and no objection was raised.

During his stay at Vaipicota the archbishop began to attend the daily services in Syriac. This continued for several days,

until he found out that in some of the prayers the Patriarch of Babylon (or of the East) was prayed for as 'Universal Pastor', a title which, so he believed, was proper only to the Pope. He took great offence at this, and in spite of all advice to the contrary called the archdeacon and a few of his clergy to a private meeting at which he expressed his indignation in vigorous terms and then produced a written notice declaring the Patriarch to be an excommunicated heretic and forbidding all mention of him in the prayers. He demanded that George and two of the senior clergy sign this,—and so overawed were they that they did, though very unwillingly. The notice was then posted to the gates of the church. It was now the turn of the Syrians to be offended. A great commotion ensued, which George with difficulty pacified by assuring the crowd that his signature meant nothing, and that it was necessary to dissemble for the present in view of the Portuguese power. For their part the Portuguese with Menezes were alarmed by the incident and advised him to flee to Cochin out of danger; but he refused and declared that he would continue his journey.

News of the events at Vaipicota having spread, Menezes met with an unfavourable reception at the next three places he visited. At Parur he was greeted unceremoniously; the men of the congregation only came to church armed; and they flatly refused to be confirmed. At the next place the people were too preoccupied to notice him; they were expecting an attack from their enemies, and he found the church filled with goods and women gathered there for refuge; no men were to be seen. At a third place, where the archdeacon had a house and was understood to have invited him to stay a few days, he found the church shut and himself boycotted; not even the archdeacon appeared. At this point his Portuguese companions again besought him to give up his project and go back to Cochin. He again refused; but, realizing that he could accomplish nothing if the people continued to display such hostility, he wrote a conciliatory letter to George asking him to come and talk the matter over. George came, escorted by a body of armed men, and a conference took place on Menezes' boat. After much debate it was agreed that a synod should be called later in the year to settle questions of doctrine, and that in the mean time Menezes might visit churches, preach and give the blessing, but not confirm or perform other episcopal acts. Menezes having agreed to this, George agreed to accompany him and to refrain from stirring up the people against him. This agreement

however did not last long. They visited one place together, where Menezes' sermon, on his favourite anti-Nestorian theme, gave such offence that George left him, pleading that he was not well.

After this Menezes left that part of the diocese and journeyed to the south as far as Quilon, partly to avoid the area where George's influence seemed to be greatest and partly on political business. In those regions he had better success, largely because the rulers of several small states were well disposed to him and influenced their Syrian subjects to receive him well. Jesuit missionaries had also been at work in some of the places, so that the people were not unprepared. On this journey, finding himself well received, he ventured again to celebrate Mass in the churches and to confirm. This of course was contrary to the agreement made with the archdeacon, though he might perhaps argue that George by his departure had broken it first. Only slight opposition was encountered. As Holy Week and Easter drew near, he was moving northwards again in the domains of the Rajah of Cochin.

By this time George, who had become alarmed at hearing of his proceedings, was doing his best to check the archbishop's growing influence by writing round to the churches urging people to oppose him and threatening to excommunicate those who submitted to him, and also by appealing to the rajahs to protect their subjects against Portuguese aggression. The Rajah of Cochin and some of the minor rulers, being well aware of the danger and feeling uneasy, did try from time to time to turn people against him and put obstacles in his way; but when Menezes withstood them, expostulating with their officials or with themselves and threatening them with the Portuguese government's displeasure, they seldom persisted long. He meanwhile had found a new way of winning himself a following, namely by ordaining candidates for the priesthood. As there had been no ordinations since Mar Abraham's death, nor perhaps in the last two years of his life, many young deacons were available. Thirty-eight men were ordained by Menezes at Udayamperur (Diamper) on the Saturday before Passion Sunday,[1] in spite of energetic protests by George, the rajah and his Nayars

[1] J. Hough: *The History of Christianity in India*, I, p. 385, whose account of Menezes' journey I am following, says Palm Sunday, and he has been followed by others; but his account of subsequent events on pp. 392-393 implies that the ordination at Diamper took place a week earlier.

and a section of the local Syrians. They were ordained of course by the Roman rite, promising obedience to Menezes as their archbishop, after being required to renounce Nestorianism and the Patriarch and profess the creed of Pope Pius. 'It was thus', comments the Portuguese chronicler Gouvea, 'that Menezes began to secure in this country a number of persons who remained faithful to him, and never abandoned his interests.'[1] Holy Week, which he spent at Kaduturutty, began with opposition but ended in triumph, the people being fascinated by the Roman ceremonial, which was gone through in full with the help of a choir from Cochin. Another ordination with many candidates took place on Holy Saturday. On the morning of Easter Day after the service the Syrians held their customary *nercha*, or love-feast, in the porch of the church, and Menezes was invited as their bishop to come and bless the food. He finished the day by going round the houses in the evening visiting the sick, speaking kindly to them and helping them with gifts of money, regretting at the same time that their own bishops had so much neglected this part of a pastor's duty.

So he went on his way, combining aggression with condescension, hectoring rulers and their officials if they obstructed him, calling them to his aid if the people were obstinate, almost always master of the situation, steadily extending his influence over clergy and people, and building up a pro-Portuguese party. The archdeacon remained at a distance, doing his best to foment opposition by messages and appeals to the people and the rulers, but not daring to oppose the masterful archbishop to his face. It soon became evident that his efforts were ineffective and that Menezes was succeeding in his attempt to take charge of the Syrian diocese. Menezes, hearing that he was feeling discouraged, wrote pressing him to submit, and George thought it politic to return a soft answer begging pardon for his opposition. The reply was a draft agreement sent to him with a demand that he come in person within twenty days and sign it in Menezes' presence. This meant a complete capitulation. He was to renounce Nestorianism, to profess once more the creed of Pope Pius, to declare that the doctrine of the Syrian Church and that of the Church of Rome were one and the same; he was to affirm the supremacy of the Pope, to anathematize the Patriarch of Babylon and hold no more communication with him; he was to promise to receive no bishop but one sent by the Pope and

[1] Hough, I, p. 392.

recognized by the Archbishop of Goa, and in the mean time to accept Menezes as his bishop; he was to agree to deliver up the Syriac books of the diocese to be examined and purged of errors or else burnt; and he was to co-operate in calling the proposed synod and agree to be bound by its decisions. George delayed as long as he could, relying on the support of the Rajah of Cochin and the minor ruler in whose territory Angamāli lay; but when Menezes prevailed on these to summon him, he came and signed at Vaipicota.

All that remained was to make arrangements for the synod. George and those who came with him proposed that it should meet at Angamāli, the Syrian centre inland; but Menezes would not accept this, and it was finally agreed that the place of meeting should be Udayamperur (or, as it is usually called in English books, Diamper), south-east of Cochin on the other side of the backwater and well within the Portuguese sphere of influence, and the date 20th June 1599. In Menezes' circular, which is dated 14th May 1599, and is commanded to be read in all the churches and affixed to the church gates, the archdeacon and all Syrian priests not hindered by old age or other just impediment are ordered to attend, and each local church is ordered to send four lay delegates fully empowered to act in its name. The purpose of calling the synod is said to be 'to treat of all such matters as are convenient for the honour of God, the exaltation of the holy catholic faith and divine worship, the good of the church, the extirpation of vice, the reformation of the Christians of the said diocese, and the profit and peace of their souls',—a sufficiently comprehensive agenda.[1]

The notices went out, and careful preparations for the synod were made. The 'decrees' to be passed by it were drawn up by Menezes and Roz and translated into Malayalam; steps were taken to conciliate certain prominent individuals and to make sure of the support of the princes; and on Trinity Sunday at Parur Menezes held another ordination, where, it is said, the candidates were no fewer than fifty, with the result that by the time the synod met the new clergy out-numbered the old.

[1] For the full text see Hough, II, pp. 1-7, and J. N. Ogilvie: *The Apostles of India*, pp. 441-445. The archdeacon's circular has not survived.

Chapter VI

THE SYNOD OF DIAMPER AND AFTER

The synod of Diamper (to give it its familiar name) is probably the most famous episode in Indian Church History,—famous not as a model of an ecclesiastical assembly, but for the extraordinary nature of its decisions and their effect. It is for this reason that a modern Roman Catholic historian calls 1599 'a fateful date and one of the darkest in the history of the relations between Latins and Orientals.'[1]

Arriving at Diamper on June 9th, eleven days before the synod was due to begin, Menezes brought with him the draft which he and Fr. Roz had prepared, containing page upon page of decrees to be submitted to the synod. They covered all the main heads of Roman doctrine and sacramental teaching, all points mentioned in the agreement with George,[2] all the chief differences between Syrian and Western practice (such as those noted in the last chapter), and many details of administration. He called together a small committee, consisting of eight leading Syrian priests, four laymen and six Jesuits, to whom he read and explained his draft. Some amendments were accepted to decrees concerning the local working out of his proposals, but in major matters he would allow no alteration.

The synod itself, beginning on the 20th of June 1599, was a very large one, attended by 133 priests, 20 deacons and subdeacons 660 lay representatives,—in all 813 persons on the Syrian side. According to Philip there were only two churches which did not send delegates;[3] it was thus a thoroughly representative gathering. With Menezes were Portuguese clergy and the captain and officials from the Portuguese settlement of Cochin; an armed escort was also in attendance.

After the celebration of Mass Menezes, explaining the reason for calling the synod, announced that he had done it because Pope Clement VIII had entrusted the government of the Malabar Church to him, until the vacant diocese should have a bishop of its own, and that in any case it belonged to him as Metropolitan

[1] Tisserant: *Eastern Christianity in India*, p. 166.

[2] See above, p. 86.

[3] *The Indian Church of St Thomas*, p. 118.

and Primate of the Indies, the diocese being vacant. He then inquired whether it pleased the synod to meet and treat of the correction of heresy, union with the Pope and reform of church practice. Those present having indicated agreement, a Syrian priest, Jacob of Pallurte, was appointed by general consent interpreter of the proceedings and to read the synod's decrees, 'which were to be in the Malabar tongue'; two Jesuits were appointed to help him. It was then agreed that none of the members of the synod should depart from the town without leave, until all the business should be finished and the decrees signed; that there should be daily celebrations of both the Roman and the Syrian liturgy for the success of the synod; and that there should be no private or sectional meetings of members without the consent of the Archbishop.[1]

At the second session, on the second day, the main business began. Menezes, kneeling robed at the altar and holding a cross on the gospel book, made in his own name and in the name of all a solemn profession of faith according to the form published by Pope Pius IV in 1564 after the Council of Trent and known as the Tridentine profession of faith.[2] In the passage towards the end, which provides for the repudiation of all heresies, there was inserted a definite condemnation of Nestorianism, and of the statement that there is one 'law' of St Thomas and one of St Peter, both different, and afterwards came an explicit repudiation of the Patriarch of Babylon and a promise to accept no bishop but one sent by the Pope. After Menezes had risen, the Syrian clergy and laity were required to make the same profession; but as soon as they were made aware of this, many of them protested. They were Christians already; why should they be asked to profess the Faith afresh, as if they had not had it before? To this Menezes replied that it was the duty of all Christians to make profession of their faith when required by authority to do so, or in case of doubt. Had not he himself just

[1] Session I, decrees 1, 4, 5. Decree 1 also contains an invitation to members to submit subjects for the agenda. Whether any did so does not appear.

[2] An English version of this may be seen in H. Bettenson: *Documents of the Christian Church*, pp. 372 ff. The Council of Trent was a great council of the Roman Church, held after the Protestant Reformation, at which Roman doctrine was clarified and defined, especially on points challenged by Protestants, and many decisions were taken for the correction of abuses and the strengthening of church life and administration. It lasted intermittently from 1545 to 1563.

done so and taken a fresh oath? Why then should they hesitate to do the same? After he had pacified them, George, the archdeacon, made the profession; and then all the Syrians present repeated it, kneeling on their knees, the words being dictated to them in Malayalam by Jacob of Pallurte. After this first the clergy and then the laity went up to Menezes one by one and took the oath kneeling before him. But the objectors were not all satisfied. While this was going on, a group of about seventy, headed by a well-known priest, gathered in the porch and seemed to be holding an indignation meeting. However, when Menezes sent some of his party demanding to know what the matter was, their courage deserted them; and all the reply that came back was that, if they took this oath and submitted to Portuguese bishops, the Portuguese government should promise to protect their interests in a certain grievance they had against the rajah's government. Menezes was able to assure them of this that very day; for, when the oath-taking was finished, he publicly commended the Syrians to the Portuguese captain of Cochin, who was present; who then and there knelt down before the Archbishop and promised in the name of the King of Portugal to give them the benefit of his government's protection in all matters concerning their religion.

It was further ordered that all clergy not present at the synod should make their profession before Menezes on his next visitation of their churches and that in future the same profession made before a bishop should be a condition of holding office and of ordination.

From the third session began the reading of the decrees defining doctrine and laying down in detail the consequent changes in practice that were henceforth to be observed in the Malabar Church. They are far too long to be reproduced here even in brief; but the following is a slight indication of the main contents.[1] They include:

[1] The English text is in Hough, II, pp. 513-683. Hough has it from the English translation (by Geddes, chaplain at Lisbon, 1678-1688) of the Portuguese book by Antonio de Gouvea: *Jornada do Arcebispo de Goa Dom Frey Aleixo de Menezes etc.* (1606). Gouvea was in India with Menezes, though he did not accompany him to Malabar, and his work is the prime authority for the history of the synod and of Menezes' journeys. He writes of course entirely from the Portuguese point of view. There is no contemporary account from the Syrian side. For useful summaries of the decrees see Ferroli, I, pp. 185-204; Tisserant, pp. 56-64; Brown, pp. 34-37.

1. Clear renunciation of Nestorianism and a statement of the Catholic Faith strongly Western in tone;
2. Clear renunciation of the Patriarch of Babylon (or of the East) and insistence on the duty of obedience to the Pope instead;
3. A fairly full explanation of the seven Roman sacraments, with many detailed provisions concerning their use and manner of celebration;
4. Arrangements for administration, e.g., division of the Church into parishes, provision of ministers, feasts and fasts to be kept, etc.
5. Miscellaneous provisions concerning life and manners, e.g., relations with non-Christians, superstitious practices, etc. The doctrinal sections, especially those on the sacraments, give an admirably lucid summary of Roman teaching as defined by the Council of Trent. The remaining sessions were occupied by the long recital of all these decrees, which were accepted with some occasional demur but no serious opposition by the Syrians, and the synod came to an end on June 26th.

In those momentous seven days the Syrian Church in India accepted, under pressure but without serious resistance, the rule of the Portuguese hierarchy and the doctrine and many of the customs of the Western Church. In doing so they repudiated the Patriarch to whom they had hitherto owed allegiance, and consented to abandon many of their traditional customs. Some indeed remained, the chief of which were the use of Syriac as liturgical language and the liturgy itself (though with certain alterations); but the general result was that they found themselves not only subject to the Pope, but cut off from their mother-Church to be conformed to the Roman Catholicism of Europe under the control of Portuguese bishops. From being an Eastern Church, latterly in alliance with Rome through events outside its control, they were compelled to become part of the western church organization. It was a complete triumph for Menezes; but it was a most high-handed and unscrupulous proceeding. Doubtless there were elements in Syrian Christianity which were objectionable from a western point of view; doubtless also the Portuguese, rightly or wrongly, had lost faith in Mar Abraham and his policy, and were obsessed by the idea that nothing short of the full romanization of the Malabar Church would suffice for its well-being; still through self-will and over-eagerness and lack of sympathy with eastern ways they went too far and did injustice,—as has been recognized by Roman Catholic

writers on relations between eastern Churches and Rome. How much high-handedness there was appears vividly when one reflects that the Patriarch whom the Malabar Syrians were compelled by the decrees of Diamper to renounce was actually in communion with the Pope at the time,—if we may assume him to have been of Sulaka's line, as the Patriarchs under whom Mar Joseph and Mar Abraham had officiated in India had been. Menezes, it is clear, was not minded to distinguish between one Patriarch and another; and perhaps many of the Syrians agreed with him in this respect. Still he had in effect condemned a man whom the Pope had approved. Yet there is no indication that the result was displeasing to Rome, and, as we have seen, Menezes explicitly claimed the authority of Pope Clement VIII for what he did. The truth would appear to be that, although earlier Popes had been willing to recognize the jurisdiction of the Patriarchs of Sulaka's line in Malabar and the Malabar Church itself as a legitimate part of an eastern Church outside the western organization, yet the persistent accusations of heresy against Mar Abraham by the Portuguese in the end convinced the Holy See that the situation in India was unsatisfactory, and brought it round to the Portuguese point of view.

It is natural to ask why the Syrians submitted so tamely; for their lack of resistance and their failure to support their own archdeacon are as striking a feature of the story as Portuguese high-handedness. The immediate reason for their acquiescence at the synod was that Menezes had already won many of them over to his side. How this had been possible the following considerations may help to explain. The Syrians were without a bishop and were ill-organized to meet aggression. Though attached to their traditional customs, they do not seem to have been a well instructed people, aware of their doctrinal position and able to uphold it with conviction. Moreover they had already for many years been exposed to Roman teaching and influence, both directly through contact with Franciscans, Jesuits and other Roman Catholics and indirectly through their own bishops; so that the distinction between the Roman and the Syrian Churches cannot have seemed so sharp to them as it has seemed to historians since, writing with the religious controversies and struggles of Europe in mind, or even to Syrian writers of a later date. The Pope was no arch-enemy to them, nor were they accustomed to think of Rome as the Scarlet Woman; and further, though feeling might run high at times, they had

not given up the idea that the Portuguese were their Christian brethren. Yet they were formidable brethren; and perhaps the root of the matter was that the Syrians stood in awe of them. The Portuguese were powerful and able; the overseas trade in pepper, so important to many Syrians, was under their control; their money and influence prevailed over the Hindu rulers; their control of the sea could cut the Syrians off from their Patriarch; in the matter of heresy there was the Inquisition at Goa and the habit of shipping accused bishops off to Europe. It would have been hard for the Syrians, a minority community in their own country, to stand against them; and on the other hand there were solid advantages in Portuguese help and protection. So they yielded; and in return they got Portuguese help. The King of Portugal granted a large sum annually for the maintenance of parish priests, the Syrians had the support of the Portuguese power in any trouble with their non-Christian rulers, and the pepper trade continued to flourish.

After the synod Menezes resumed his visitation of the Syrian churches. This time he spent four and a half months among them, going about with impressive pomp and distributing largesse, as at Kalloorkat, where, so the story goes, he caused a certain kind of sweetmeat called *kolukatta* to be distributed among the children and each child was delighted to find a gold coin inside.[1] By such means he was at pains to ingratiate himself with the people, and he was usually well received wherever he went. Little open hostility or discontent was encountered, though what some people were saying behind his back is indicated by a farce which was being played at Palayur, in which St Thomas and St Peter were shown disputing about jurisdiction in Malabar before St Cyriac, a popular Syrian saint to whom the local church was dedicated, who gave his decision in favour of St Thomas. When Menezes heard of this he was not amused; he gave out that the actors must be possessed by devils, and had them exorcized. During this visitation arrangements were made to bring the decrees of Diamper into force. Priests who had not been present at the synod had to make their profession of faith and take the oath; vicars were installed in parishes; children left long without Baptism were baptized; four men were appointed in each church as *oeconomi* (stewards). In each place some of the decrees were read out and explained.[2] According to one

[1] Philip, p. 122.
[2] Brown, pp. 37 ff; Ferroli, I, p. 205.

of them married clergy were ordered to separate from their wives, or else give up their ministry. According to another the books of the Syrians were called in to be examined and 'purged', or, if adjudged too far gone in heresy, burnt. The synod had definitely condemned certain Nestorian books by name; these could be promptly burnt wherever they were found; but the correction of the others, for example the Syriac version of the Bible, was a slower process; it had been committed to Fr. Roz and the Jesuits of Vaipicota.

The synod had expressly recognized that it was impracticable to destroy service books, since they were needed for use and could not be replaced. Thus the Syriac liturgy formerly in use was retained with the corrections ordered by the synod. These included the removal of the names of Nestorian saints, the replacement of the Patriarch's name by the Pope's, the addition of the Roman ceremonies of elevation and genuflexion after the consecration of the Bread and the Cup, the bringing of the Nicene Creed and the Words of Institution into conformity with the Roman forms, the replacement of communion by intinction by the Roman practice of giving communion under the species of bread only to all except the celebrant, the use of the Roman words of administration and the correction of phrases really or supposedly Nestorian.[1] This was to remain the service in regular use, and in spite of the changes it was still recognizably the old service. Fr. Roz however was also asked to translate the Latin Mass into Syriac for occasional use by Syrian priests. Other services (ordination, Baptism etc.)[2] were treated more drastically, the Roman form, translated into Syriac, being simply substituted for the Syrian. Menezes had evidently revised his early opinion that the use of Syriac in the Malabar Church ought to be suppressed and Latin introduced instead.

Angamāli, the seat of the Syrian bishops, contained a larger collection of books and documents than other places. Menezes' visit there has earned him an evil fame because he caused most of these to be burnt, and this burning, with others elsewhere, is the reason why we now have so little written evidence of the history of the Syrian Church in India before the sixteenth century.

[1] For details see King, II, pp. 454 f, 473 ff.

[2] i.e. those included in the Roman Ritual and Pontifical, which books the Goan synod of 1585 had already caused to be translated. There is nowadays a movement to revise these services so as to restore them to an eastern form. See King, II, p. 477.

It is natural to suppose that there were records of correspondence and possibly other documents, which would have thrown light on it, and, if so, their destruction is greatly to be deplored. Yet, if the list of burnt manuscripts given by Mingana[1] is at all typical of the collection at Angamāli, our regret is mitigated, for most of these are Syrian books written outside India and still existing elsewhere, and few of them seem to have any bearing on affairs in this country. Some real loss there must have been, and, whatever it was, it is deplorable; but the rhetoric in which some writers have indulged, comparing Menezes' act with the destruction of the great library at Alexandria ordered by the Caliph Omar in 643 A.D., is exaggerated.

On this journey, besides occupying himself with the Syrian Christians, Menezes sometimes took occasion to speak to Hindus, and it is said that some were persuaded by him to become Christians. During his last visit to Cochin he even tried to persuade the rajah; but without success.

On receiving news that the King of Portugal had died and that his presence was required at Goa, he decided to cut short his tour. He made his way therefore back to Cochin, visiting only places that lay on his route. It was necessary to make arrangements for the administration of the diocese after he had gone. Calling a meeting of clergy and laity of that district, he nominated George, the archdeacon, to take charge for the time being, until a bishop could be appointed, with two Jesuits, Fr. Roz and the rector of the seminary, to assist him; and then he raised the question who should be proposed to the King of Portugal and the Pope to be appointed bishop. The meeting promptly suggested himself. He replied that that would hardly be possible unless he were allowed to resign the archbishopric of Goa,—which indeed he made a show of doing; but he also recommended them to name someone else who might be chosen if his resignation were not accepted by the King and the Pope. After some deliberation they named Francis Roz. These things concluded, he came to Cochin and, after the interview with the rajah, embarked, the archdeacon and a number of Syrians going with him to the harbour to see him off. It might be thought that they would be glad to see him go; but in appearance at any rate their feeling was quite the reverse. They showed him every mark of esteem and even, it is said, wept at his departure,—an

[1] *The Early Spread of Christianity in India*, p. 68. See the whole note, pp. 67-72.

extraordinary token of the personal ascendancy he had won over them during the ten months he had been among them. It is easy to dismiss all this as mere flattery, and so perhaps it was on the part of some; but there were others, one cannot help thinking, who had really begun to look upon him as their powerful patron, for Menezes for all his faults was impressive and efficient, and he knew how to please. He sailed away from Cochin and reached Goa on the 16th November 1599, to find that he had been appointed Governor in his absence. After ten years, during which he combined the two offices of Archbishop and Governor, he was recalled to Portugal (1609), and so he passes out of Indian Church History.

In Malabar the work of reforming the Syrian Church according to the decrees of Diamper went on, not without difficulty, under Jesuit bishops.[1] The first of them was Francis Roz, whose consecration at Goa in 1601 brought the Syrian bishopric definitely under the Portuguese padroado. He was consecrated as mere Bishop of Angamāli, not archbishop (or metropolitan) as Mar Abraham had been, and the see was made suffragan to Goa, as Menezes had intended. This last step gave needless offence, and Roz himself strove to get it rectified. He gained his point in 1608, when the archiepiscopal status of the see was restored. A year later its centre was moved from Angamāli inland to Cranganore on the coast, which, being a Portuguese station, was a safer residence for the new archbishop; but the change made fresh trouble for him by offending the Bishop of Cochin, to whose diocese Cranganore had belonged until then.

Roz was a competent man of long experience, who had a good knowledge of Syriac and Malayalam and was familiar with the affairs of the Malabar Syrians. He addressed himself to his task with energy, providing Syriac service books, visiting churches, settling quarrels, dealing with matters of discipline, and, when necessary, able to call in Portuguese troops to back his intervention with local rulers on behalf of oppressed Christians. But his very energy and competence led to trouble with the archdeacon, for it was a new thing in Malabar that a bishop should govern. The functions of the Syrian bishops, who were always foreigners, new to India, had been mainly liturgical; administration and discipline had been in the hands of Indian archdeacons; it was

[1] On the events to which the rest of this chapter is devoted see further Ferroli, I, chapters X and XIII; II, chapters II and III; Tisserant, pp. 69-88; Brown, chapter IV.

they who had governed. Now that Roz, with his Western idea of episcopal duties, was actively ruling the diocese himself, George felt aggrieved, for he saw the powers he used to exercise being taken away from him. Consequently he began to complain of the activities of Roz and the Jesuits, and to intrigue against them. With the support of the Rajah of Cochin and, apparently, the connivance of the Bishop of Cochin and other non-Jesuits, who had reasons of their own for opposing the Jesuits, he and four or five disgruntled priests rebelled against the archbishop in 1608, and were excommunicated by him. Though he was reconciled again in 1615, Roz, it was clear, placed little trust in him; for, when the archbishop was obliged to be absent from the diocese in 1618, it was not George but the rector of Vaipicota whom he appointed as administrator. Offended at this, George again went into opposition, followed this time by a fairly numerous body of Christians,—about one third of the community, it is said. Roz reacted vigorously, excommunicating him once more and trying to induce the Hindu rulers to arrest him and deliver him up. In this he had the approval of most of his Jesuit colleagues; but there were some who thought that a more conciliatory policy would have been better. George was reconciled a second time shortly before Roz died in 1624.

The next archbishop was Stephen de Brito, a Portuguese Jesuit who had been coadjutor with right of succession since 1620. He too had worked long in Malabar and knew Malayalam, though he had the disadvantage of not knowing the liturgical language, Syriac. He was a man of mild disposition, on good terms with the people and with the archdeacon, and he had been one of those who counselled moderation. When he became archbishop, he showed himself friendly to George and did his best to work in harmony with him in spite of the misgivings of other Jesuits. The archdeacon for his part responded, and for a time all was well; but by and by the dislike he had contracted for Jesuits got the better of his regard for de Brito. What caused this to happen was an attempt of the Dominicans to start a mission among the Syrian Christians. An Italian Dominican, Fr. Donato, sent to India by the recently founded Propaganda,[1] settled at Kaduturutty, where he built a church and a school, intended to become a seminary. He came without the sanction

[1] i.e. the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (*Sacra Congregatio pro Propaganda Fide*), the central organization in Rome for Roman Catholic missions. It was established in 1622.

of the archbishop but with the support of the Friars of his Order in Cochin, who did not see why the only missionaries working among the Syrians should be Jesuits. The archbishop, foreseeing factions, protested to Rome; but Donato was able to establish himself, and he became popular with the Syrians because, unlike de Brito, he knew Syriac. It was even reported among them that he had come from the Patriarch of Babylon. The inevitable result was that a party formed itself round him, which preferred the Dominicans to the Jesuits. George allied himself with this group. In 1628 he wrote to the papal representative in Lisbon renewing his complaints against the Jesuits, urging that future archbishops of Cranganore should be chosen from another Order, and suggesting that Donato should be appointed coadjutor to de Brito. These suggestions reached Propaganda and were actually approved; but other circumstances prevented their being carried out.

Even while these things were happening, de Brito persisted in his policy of conciliation. He tried to win over the archdeacon by granting him more powers in the diocese. In fact he went so far as to sign a paper virtually restoring to him all the authority over appointments and discipline that the archdeacons had formerly possessed under the Syrian bishops, and leaving nothing to himself except ordinations. But the attempt failed completely. George took full advantage of the powers, but continued to agitate against the Jesuits. He practically ruled the diocese until his death in 1637. He was succeeded as archdeacon by his nephew, a young man called Thomas. Donato died in 1634, de Brito in 1641.

The third Jesuit archbishop, Francis Garzia, an elderly man of Roz's way of thinking, set himself to reassert the authority his predecessor had let go, and generally to tighten up discipline. This exposed him to the charge of harshness. His relations with the young archdeacon Thomas were difficult, for Thomas, though not in so strong a position as his uncle had been, strove to retain as much independence as he could; there was never full confidence between him and Garzia. Several attempts at a compromise were made, but without success; the archdeacon temporized and dissembled, but remained at heart rebellious and un-co-operative. A further source of discontent both at this time and earlier was that, in spite of the King's repeated commands, the viceroys of Goa failed to make available enough funds to pay the agreed stipends of the Syrian clergy in full.

The uneasy situation continued for the first ten years of Garzia's episcopate. Then an incident occurred which provoked a full-scale revolt.

Hopes of getting Jesuits replaced by Dominicans having faded, the archdeacon and his party began to think again of the old connexion with Mesopotamia. Letters were sent to the Nestorian Patriarch and also, it is said, to the Patriarchs of other Eastern Churches (the Coptic in Egypt and the Jacobite in Syria) asking for a bishop. In 1652 a foreign Syrian bishop actually arrived in India, a man commonly called Ahatalla.[1] Who he was and whence he came are matters of some doubt. It would seem most natural to suppose him to have been sent by the Patriarch of Babylon (Nestorian or Chaldean?) in response to appeals from India; but the contemporary Roman Catholic accounts say that he was a deposed Jacobite bishop or patriarch sent by the Coptic Patriarch of Alexandria, and even that on his way he had visited the Nestorian Patriarch and received credentials from him too;[2] which, if true, is certainly stranger than fiction. At a later date the Jacobites of Malabar were persuaded that he was no lesser person than the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch himself.[3] Whoever he was, he was not destined to exercise office in India, for he fell into the hands of the Portuguese, who detained him at Mylapore. Happening to meet there two deacons from Malabar who had gone on a pilgrimage to the shrine of St Thomas, he made himself known to them and entrusted them with a letter to the Malabar Church announcing his arrival. In a Latin version of this letter, quoted by Cardinal Tisserant, he styles himself 'Ignatius, Patriarch of all India and China', says that he is authorized by 'the Lord Pope', and calls upon the Syrians to send two priests and forty men to conduct him to Malabar.[4] From the Syrian side it was later claimed that he had written nominating the archdeacon Thomas as their bishop.

[1] Ahatalla = Yahb-Alaha = Devadatta.

[2] So the 17th century Carmelite Fr. Vincent Maria (Hough, II pp. 300 f.). Ferroli's version (II p. 32), based on 'a Report of 1654', does not mention the visit to the Nestorian Patriarch, but agrees otherwise.

[3] See the Indian Syriac documents translated in Mingana, p. 46 (early 18th century) and p. 51 (1821). On the Jacobites and the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch see below, p. 104.

[4] *Eastern Christianity in India*, p. 78 (in Latin). For a shorter version in English (perhaps summarized) from Fr. Vincent Maria see Hough, II p. 303, and Brown, p. 100. Here the Pope is identified by name (Innocent X). The whole affair of Ahatalla seems most dubious.

When the two deacons returned to Malabar with the letter, their news caused a stir. The archdeacon's party called the archbishop to a conference; but he declared Ahatalla to be a mere impostor, and refused to come. Then it became known that Ahatalla was being conveyed by sea to Goa. On the way the ship stopped at Cochin, and hearing of his presence there a large crowd of Syrians went there to demand his release; but the Portuguese shut the gates of the fort and manned the walls, until the ship had sailed again for Goa. In the excitement a rumour started that he had been thrown overboard and drowned. What actually happened was that he reached Goa, was tried by the Inquisition, found guilty of heresy and shipped off to Europe.[1]

Meanwhile the rumour spread rapidly and roused the disappointed Syrians to such fury that they broke into revolt. Gathering in a large crowd outside the church at Mattancheri (Cochin) they swore an oath on the stone cross there, called the Coonen (i.e. crooked) Cross, that they would no longer be subject to the Jesuit archbishop. As all could not reach the cross, ropes were tied to it and the people held the ropes and so took the oath. This famous event took place on the 3rd of January 1653. As news of the revolt spread through the whole region of Malabar, others joined in, until, it is said, only about four hundred remained unaffected. Thus fifty-four years after the synod of Diamper the majority of the Syrians rebelled against the Portuguese hierarchy whose rule they had there accepted. It was the Jesuits who were the chief object of the Syrians' wrath; the course of events afterwards strongly suggests that the majority of the rebels cherished no deep hostility to the Roman Church as such, though a minority may have done, having perhaps all along found the regime imposed at Diamper more irksome than the rest.

Later in the year, in May 1653, the revolted Syrians held a council at Alengad to make arrangements for their future. On the alleged authority of Ahatalla's letter they chose the archdeacon Thomas as their bishop; and, as it was manifestly impossible to get him consecrated in the regular way, twelve priests took it upon themselves to lay hands on him in a 'consecration' which they knew to be irregular. He afterwards became known as Mar Thoma I. To assist him in administration the council appointed a committee of four priests: Kadavil Chandy,

[1] See Brown, p. 100. Another account says that he was burnt at Goa.

Anjilimootil Itty Thoman, Vengoor Givarghese and Palliveetil Chandy.[1]

After the first anger cooled, some of the Syrians began to have doubts about what they had done. They realized that the consecration of Mar Thoma was invalid, and that in fact they had no proper bishop; so that, when this point was urged in argument against them, they could not help being conscious of the weakness of their position. There may have been personal disagreements too. At any rate not long afterwards two of the four members of the committee, Kadavil Chandy and Palliveetil Chandy, left the dissidents and went back to Archbishop Garzia. As it was evident that the Jesuits were unpopular, a proposal was made in 1655 that priests of a different Order, the Carmelites,[2] should be sent to Malabar. Letters to this effect were sent to Rome, apparently by certain loyal Syrian priests who had met Carmelite Fathers in Goa and Cochin, and Pope Alexander VII caused a special mission of Carmelites to be sent out to India to try to bring the schism to an end. Two of the four men appointed, Fr. Joseph Sebastiani (an Italian) and Fr. Vincent Maria (a German), travelled ahead of the others and arrived in Malabar early in 1657. Their coming was not welcome to the Jesuits, who resented the implied slight on themselves, and even the other Portuguese authorities, though they ended by supporting them, were at first hesitant. The Carmelites found that a good number of Syrians would be quite willing to return, if only they would not be placed under Jesuit rule and if the problem of the status of Mar Thoma could somehow be adjusted. This was the chief stumbling-block. He wanted them to recognize him as bishop, or, if that were impossible, to procure regular consecration for him; they insisted that they could not do either, but that he must be deposed and admit his fault and then await the decision of the higher ecclesiastical authorities whether at Goa or Rome. Several conferences were held during 1657 with him and his supporters, but no solution of this problem was found. Nevertheless with the help of those Syrians who had already returned to the Roman fold more than forty-four churches were brought back in that year. At the end of the year, after a meeting with

[1] Philip, p. 163.

[2] The Order of our Lady of Mount Carmel was originally founded in Palestine in the 12th century. It was reformed during the 16th century by St Teresa and St John of the Cross. It was the reformed Order, known as the Discalced Carmelites, which took up work in Malabar.

representatives of the parishes which had returned, Fr. Joseph and his companion left for Rome, leaving the mission in the hands of the other two members, who had by this time arrived. They took with them a signed statement, in which the people declared that, although they wished to be faithful to the Roman Church, they were much averse from being brought again under the rule of the Jesuit archbishop, and therefore begged the Pope to send them another bishop.

The Pope and the Propaganda took the hint, and Fr. Joseph came back to India in 1661 in episcopal orders as titular Bishop of Hierapolis *in partibus infidelium*[1] and apostolic administrator in Malabar; that is to say, he was made a bishop and given a special responsibility for the Syrian Christians, but apart from the diocesan organization of Cranganore. The intention was that the Syrians who had returned to the Roman obedience should be given a bishop and at the same time removed from that Jesuit control which was so obnoxious to them,—and this without formal infringement of the Portuguese padroado, since he was not actually appointed to an Indian see. It was realized however that this action would be displeasing to the Portuguese, and therefore the consecration was done in secret, and it was not revealed that Fr. Joseph had become a bishop until he landed in Malabar. To continue the arrangement he was authorized to consecrate one or two Indian vicars apostolic to succeed him. Archbishop Garzia had died in 1659, before Bishop Joseph reached India. The Carmelite bishop made Verapoli his centre.

Under Bishop Joseph and the Carmelites a determined attempt was made to bring back the remaining dissidents. More conferences were held with Mar Thoma; but they came to nothing. The help of the Malabar rajahs was enlisted to bring pressure to bear on him and his people to submit; but, though many of his followers yielded, he himself and Itty Thoman, his right-hand man, would not. Attempts were even made to seize him. According to a story related by Philip, he and Itty Thoman actually were caught on one occasion and brought to Cochin, where they were interned for the time being in the rajah's palace, to be handed over to the Portuguese; but they escaped by ex-

[1] i.e. 'in the lands of the unbelievers'; where a Christian bishopric formerly existed, but is now extinct. Hierapolis is in Turkey (Asia Minor). Titular bishops, or vicars apostolic, are appointed for regions where either the normal hierarchy has not yet been established or its jurisdiction is somehow impeded (as in this instance).

changing clothes with two laymen who were allowed to come and visit them. By the time the trick was discovered, they were far away; and after that they took care to remain out of reach.[1] As the result of the Carmelites' efforts,—or, as Philip calls them, the Carmelite persecution,—more and more Syrians left Mar Thoma and came back to the Roman obedience. By 1663, when, as we shall see, political events forced the Carmelites to leave Malabar, eighty-four churches had returned and only thirty-two remained unreconciled: so that within ten years of the revolt more than half the dissidents were back again in the Roman fold. The party of Mar Thoma, with declining numbers and having no proper bishop, were in difficulty; but a minority continued faithful to him, and the whole body never returned to Rome.

In the seventeenth century the Portuguese power in Asia began to be diminished. Other European nations entered the field, primarily for trade as the Portuguese themselves had done, so that the Portuguese found themselves challenged. At the period of which we are speaking in this chapter the most prominent among the newcomers were the Dutch, who dispossessed the Portuguese in Java (1595), Malacca (1641), Ceylon (1638-1658) and finally in certain places in India too. After capturing the forts of Quilon (1661) and Cranganore (1662) the Dutch took Cochin in 1663, and thereafter the Portuguese influence in Malabar ceased, though it continued as before in Goa and other places; for the time being the Dutch became the predominant power on that coast.[2] One of the first things they did after the capture of Cochin was to send away all the European clergy who were working among the Syrians; Italian or Portuguese, all had to go. The rule of Bishop Joseph and his Carmelite colleagues therefore soon came to an end. Before leaving he consecrated an Indian, Parampil Chandy (called by the Portuguese Alexander de Campo), to take his place as vicar apostolic. This man was also of the Pakalomattam family and a cousin of Mar Thoma; he was the first Indian bishop of the Malabar Syrians. Like Bishop Joseph he was appointed to a titular see (Megara) *in partibus infidelium*. Since the Dutch were Protestants, they were not interested in any attempts to bring the dissident Syrians back to the Roman Church; but neither did they show any inclination to make Protestants of them. They left them alone.

[1] *The Indian Church of St Thomas*, pp. 168 f.
[2] They held Cochin until 1795, when the British took it.

Bishop Joseph left India in 1664 and returned to Europe. Before leaving Malabar he formally excommunicated Mar Thoma and his adherents.

The coming of the Dutch was useful to the dissident Syrians. Not only was the pressure on them eased by the removal of the European Roman clergy and of the Portuguese power which had been behind them, but also there was now nothing to prevent them from renewing their connexion with eastern Patriarchs. It was again possible for bishops from Mesopotamia or Syria to come safely to India, since Dutch ships were now available to carry them. Thus the party began to send messages abroad, asking for a properly consecrated 'Metran' (metropolitan bishop) to be sent, who should consecrate Thomas and so regularize their position. For reasons which are not at all clear the Patriarch who eventually responded to their appeal was not the one with whom the Malabar Church had been connected immediately before the synod of Diamper, and not one of either branch of the Nestorian Church, but another, the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch, the head of another eastern Church whose doctrine of the Person of Christ is opposed to that of the Nestorian Church and also to that of western Christianity.

It has been explained already[1] how the Church throughout Syria and Mesopotamia was originally one, with Antioch as the chief see, and how in the fifth century that part of it which was in the Persian dominions became independent and eventually adopted Nestorianism. Later in the fifth century dissensions broke out at Antioch between those who accepted and those who rejected the doctrinal definition of the Council of Chalcedon (451), that there are 'two natures' (the divine and the human) in the one Person, our Lord Jesus Christ. The party which rejected this is known as Monophysite,[2] from their view that in the incarnate Christ there is only 'one nature'. The controversy continued for many years, becoming the more bitter as nationalist feeling against the Roman government (which had sponsored the Council of Chalcedon) became mixed up with it, and the Patriarch was sometimes of the one party and sometimes of the other. In the sixth century however, when the Emperors sought to coerce the Monophysites of Syria, the division became permanent and the Monophysites made a Patriarch of their own in opposition to the existing one. From their most active leader

[1] See above, pp. 24-26.

[2] From the Greek words *monē physis*, 'one nature only'.

at that time, Jacob Baradai, they are known as Jacobites and their Patriarch as the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch.[1]

It was to a successor of these Jacobite Patriarchs that the message of the dissident Syrians of Malabar went after 1663, and why they chose to appeal to him instead of the Patriarch of the East (or of Babylon) it is difficult to determine. Did they first ask the Patriarch of the East and find him unable or unwilling to send them a bishop? Or did they deliberately avoid him, seeking a Patriarch who had never been in alliance with the Roman Church? Whatever the reason may have been, it was to the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch that their request found its way; and the fact that he was on the other side of the old theological quarrel, and not in communion with the Patriarch of the East, seems to have caused them no trouble. What the Jacobite Syrians of Malabar say is that their Church was originally subject to the see of Antioch, and that they always regarded the Catholicoi or Patriarchs of the East as deputies of the Patriarch of Antioch, even after the Catholicoi became independent. Thus in passing by the Patriarch of the East and approaching the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch they were going, as it were, from a subordinate officer to his superior, and were in fact restoring an earlier connexion which dated back behind the time when the Patriarchs of the East became Nestorian. They do not deny that the Church of Malabar passed through a 'Nestorian' period, accepting Nestorian bishops and worshipping by a Nestorian rite; but they say this came about by accident and not by the deliberate choice of the Indian Church (as the romanizing period of Mar Joseph and Mar Abraham also did), and they deny that their Church was ever conscientiously attached to the Nestorian theology.[2] So, they say, it was easy for it to join the Jacobite Church, and the change was not really so far-reaching as it appears. It seems at any rate to be true that the Syrians of Malabar were not theologically minded, and that the main object of the dissidents at this period of their history was to get a bishop who was not Roman.

The bishop who came was Mar Gregorios, Metropolitan of Jerusalem, a Jacobite. He arrived in India in 1665. Some

[1] There are nowadays no fewer than seven dignitaries entitled Patriarch of Antioch: the Orthodox, the Jacobite, the Latin (i.e. Roman Catholic) and those presiding over four Uniat Churches: the Maronite, the Melkite, the Armenian and the Syrian. See B. J. Kidd: *The Churches of Eastern Christendom*, p. 306.

[2] Philip, pp. 179 ff; Keay: *History of the Syrian Church in India*, p. 54.

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say that he consecrated Mar Thoma;[1] but there seems to be doubt of it, and it is possible that there was a reversion to the old custom, the foreign bishop exercising liturgical and teaching functions and Mar Thoma ruling as archdeacon.[2] At any rate Mar Gregorios stayed in India till his death in 1672, and he and Mar Thoma worked together. He taught as a Jacobite, with anti-Nestorian and anti-Roman emphases, and sought to reintroduce oriental customs such as eastern liturgical vestments, leavened bread in the Eucharist and clerical marriage. Doubtless he would have liked to use the Syrian Jacobite liturgy; but, after his unfamiliar way of celebrating the Qurbana had been commented on, he was persuaded to use the one already current (i.e. the Nestorian liturgy as revised after the synod of Diamper), making only a few changes in details. It seems that in this and other matters changes took place only very slowly, so that for many years to come practice continued mixed. Even in the matter of clerical marriage the clergy were slow to change the custom to which they had become used. Two more Jacobite bishops, Mar Baselios and Mar Ivanios, arrived in 1678. The former died within a fortnight, but Mar Ivanios remained until 1693 to carry on the propagation of Jacobite teaching.

Thus, although the majority of the Syrians who revolted in 1653 went back to the Roman obedience, a minority persisted as a Jacobite Church; and the division so created has remained ever since. Those who did not share in the revolt, or having revolted, afterwards returned, became known as Palayankur, the Old Party. In English they are called Romo-Syrians, that is to say Syrians who have become connected with the Roman Church, in which they now enjoy Uniat status, having their own hierarchy and liturgy. They still use the Nestorian liturgy with the alterations made by the synod of Diamper and some others made since (the Syro-Malabar rite). They are still the largest group among the Syrians of Malabar. Those who remained separate after the revolt at Coonen Cross, and later received Jacobite bishops, became known as Puthenkur, the New Party. They also remain to the present day, but not as a united body. The history of the divisions that have occurred among them since the seventeenth century will concern us later.

[1] e.g. Philip, p. 174.

[2] Brown, p. 112. Roman Catholic writers say there was no consecration, e.g. Tisserant, p. 142; King, I pp. 321 and 323.

Chapter VII

JESUIT MISSIONS

WHILE the events narrated in the last chapter were taking place, the fathers of the Society of Jesus were active among non-Christians in other parts of India. In this chapter we shall consider the two most famous of their enterprises.

Late in the year 1579, when Mar Abraham was still presiding over the Malabar Church and Alexis de Menezes had not yet been appointed to India, a messenger arrived at the Jesuit College of St Paul at Goa with a letter from the Mogul emperor, Akbar, in which he expressed his desire to study the teachings of Christianity and asked the fathers to send some learned men to explain them to him. Akbar (1556-1605) had become interested in Christianity through conversation with several Portuguese, including a Jesuit from Bengal, and had acted on this man's suggestion that he should send to Goa for experts better able to answer the emperor's questions than himself. The letter created extraordinary interest at Goa, as well it might, for, if the emperor were sincere and it should be possible to convert him, a long step would have been taken towards the conversion of India. It was decided therefore to accept the invitation, and three Jesuits, Rudolfo Aquaviva, Antonio Monserrate and Francisco Henriques were selected to go. They arrived at Akbar's court in February 1580.

Akbar received them with much honour. They were allowed to furnish a chapel for Christian worship and to teach without restriction. Fr. Monserrate was made tutor to the emperor's second son, Murad, then a young boy. Akbar himself had frequent conversations with them on religious topics; he appeared to welcome their teaching and indeed to prefer it to that of the mullahs, a preference of which he made no secret. It really seemed as if he were convinced of the truth of Christianity and on the point of becoming a Christian; but whenever they urged that he should, he drew back, though he took their admonitions in good part. As they got to know him better, they realized that, although his curiosity and zest for religious discussion were boundless, and he was ready to accept ideas from other faiths, he had no serious intention of becoming a Christian. His

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actual belief was a mystery; he seemed to be interested in several religions,—Hinduism, Jainism and Zoroastrianism as well as Christianity—, but to adhere to none. The one thing definite was his reaction from and dislike of Islam, which he showed more and more openly as he overcame his enemies and achieved absolute power. Then in 1582 he promulgated a fancy religion invented by himself (the *Din Ilahi*), combining elements drawn from all the faiths in his dominions, with himself as its head. After this the Jesuits returned to Goa in 1583.

Another mission was sent in 1590 at Akbar's request, but soon returned in disgust. A third one began in 1595, and from then onwards there were Jesuits at the Mogul court for the rest of that dynasty's rule. During Akbar's lifetime hopes of his conversion never quite vanished, and one of the fathers, Jerome Xavier, nephew of St Francis, became his personal friend; but neither then nor later did Christianity make any progress among the royal family or the nobles. Converts of any kind were few. The fathers' work came to be chiefly among Europeans and their domestics.

Meanwhile a very different kind of mission had been started in Tamilnad in South India by Fr. Robert de Nobili, a young Italian Jesuit of aristocratic parentage, who arrived in India in 1605. Besides being a man of keen intellect and ardent zeal he had probably heard of the remarkable work another Jesuit, Matteo Ricci, was doing in China, where he had made himself proficient in the Confucian classics and was preaching Christianity to the learned of that country in a Chinese form.[1] After a short stay in Goa and a few months in Cochin (where he fell ill) de Nobili was sent by Fr. Albert Laerzio, the Provincial of the Malabar Province of the Society of Jesus, to join the mission on the Fishery Coast. There he spent seven months among the Parava Christians learning Tamil. But Fr. Laerzio's aim was to develop work in the interior, and it was to this that he destined de Nobili.

The place chosen for him was Madura, the capital of the Nayak kings who at this period were ruling the south-east corner of India; it was also a centre of learning, where Hindu philosophy and science were extensively studied. There was also a Christian church there with an elderly Portuguese Jesuit, Fr. Fernandez, in charge. This man had been there since 1595, ministering to

[1] Ricci was in China from 1583 to 1610. On the way there he spent four years at Goa.

occasional Portuguese traders and a congregation drawn from the Parava community; these were not people belonging to Madura itself, but people from the coast who had settled there. Because he was useful as an intermediary in business with the Portuguese, he was protected by the king. He ran an elementary school for boys under a Hindu master, and a small dispensary; but as an evangelist he had not been able to make any impression on the people of Madura.

De Nobili came to Madura in November 1606. He came as an ordinary Jesuit priest, wearing the usual black cassock of those days and accompanied by the Provincial and by Fr. Fernandez, returning from a visit to the coast, and at first he lived in the mission house with Fernandez. Perhaps he had already begun to form ideas of his own about missionary methods. At any rate by cultivating the acquaintance of the Hindu schoolmaster, a Nayak who was reckoned a minor guru in his caste, he got an insight into Hindu life and ideas and had his eyes fully opened to the great gulf that existed between the caste Hindus and the Christians, whether Indian or Portuguese; and he soon became convinced that a change of method was needed.

Christianity had made scarcely any contact with the more respectable classes of the Hindus. In Malabar, to be sure, there were the Syrian Christians; but elsewhere Christianity presented itself as the religion of the Portuguese and their followers. Indian Christians tended to be low caste people who had taken refuge with the Portuguese, or others who had conformed to Portuguese ways. In the eyes of the Hindus Christianity was the religion of the 'Franks' or 'Parangis', the term used to denote especially the Portuguese, but also any kind of European. It was not a complimentary term; it suggested meat-eating, wine-drinking, loose-living, arrogant persons, whose manners were so far removed from Indian propriety that social intercourse with them was unthinkable. Thus, when Fr. Fernandez spoke of Christianity as *parangi margam*, as was his custom, he was doing nothing to recommend it to the caste Hindus who formed the main body of Hindu society. Yet, unless these were won to Christianity, there could be little hope that the Faith would ever take deep root in India. These were the people who must be approached, and, since the foreign aspect of Christianity repelled them, this must be given up. The approach must be made as from within Indian society, not from outside. Indian society here meant the caste system with the Brahmins at its head.

De Nobili therefore determined to indianize himself. As a member of the Italian nobility he claimed to be the equivalent of a Kshatriya. It seemed however that the state of life best corresponding to his position as a priest and a religious would be that of a sannyasi-guru. He therefore asked permission of his superiors to adopt this mode of life, and, while Laerzio consulted the Archbishop of Cranganore (Francis Roz), in whose jurisdiction Madura lay, he engaged a Brahmin cook and began living in Indian style, Fernandez having been temporarily called away to the coast. As news of what he was doing spread in the town, interest was aroused. Already in February 1607 he was able to begin instructing a group of young men, which was also joined by the schoolmaster. With the latter he entered on a long debate on the rival teachings of Hinduism and Christianity. They argued for twenty days, four or five hours a day, and the upshot was that the schoolmaster declared himself convinced, accepted de Nobili as his guru and was baptized. (After what has been said about indianization it is disappointing to have to record that he was given the name of Albert). Three other young men, all Nayaks, soon followed his example. Before de Nobili had been in Madura a year, there had been ten baptisms.[1]

In November 1607, permission having been received, he exchanged his black cassock for *kavi* robes and his leather shoes for wooden sandals, and became a sannyasi in earnest. It became necessary to separate from Fr. Fernandez, who returned shortly afterwards and disapproved. With the help of an influential Hindu friend a site was found in another part of the town, to which de Nobili retired. A little mud-walled house and chapel were built, and there he established himself as a guru in his *mutt*, observing a strict ascetic regime, attended by his Brahmin cook and servant, living on rice, vegetables, fruit and milk, and eating only one meal a day, and going out very seldom. He took care not to visit Fr. Fernandez except under cover of night. Hearing of the foreign sannyasi, many wished to see him; but he did not at first make himself easily accessible. Visitors would be told that the Aiyar was bathing or occupied in meditation, and sometimes they would be obliged to call several times before being able to meet him. Then they would be admitted to his presence, he sitting up on a dais, they, after making their namaskarams, seated on a carpet spread on the floor, and he would charm them by his elegant Tamil, apt quotations and penetrating

[1] D. Ferroli: *The Jesuits in Malabar*, I p. 350.

sayings. As his reputation grew, much time was spent in religious and philosophical discussions with people who came to see him. One point of teaching that he emphasized was the necessity of a guru. A number of the younger men were willing to become his disciples.

Here he made the acquaintance of a Telugu Brahmin pandit, named Sivadarma, with whom he began to learn Sanskrit. By August 1608 he was able to speak it; and then he even persuaded the pandit to teach him some of the Vedic texts, and, what is more, even write them down for him. This had to be done in secret, for in those days only Brahmins were allowed to study the Vedas, and usually it was all done by memory; to write them down was an unheard-of thing. By getting to know the authoritative Hindu scriptures he hoped to be able to meet the Brahmins on their own ground. His association with the pandit led to the latter's baptism in 1609.

In that year the number of converts rose to 63. They were of several castes, some Nayaks, some cultivators, and some Brahmins. They were baptized of course in water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost by the ordinary Latin rite; but they were not required to break caste or change their dress, food or mode of life except in the matter of idolatry; nor were they expected to join themselves to the Parava congregation. Those who had worn the sacred cord and the *kudumi* or hair-tuft retained them. There had been some deliberation about this, because such emblems had been forbidden by the Synod of Goa years before; but Archbishop Roz, supported by Archbishop Menezes, allowed it. Similarly the ceremonial bathing and the rite of investiture with the cord and the Tamil rite of Pongal were kept, with Christian prayers substituted for the Hindu *mantrams*. Thus the converts were able to remain in their families. De Nobili believed and taught explicitly that, when a man became a Christian, he need not leave his caste or station in life; for he was persuaded that caste was a social custom parallel to distinctions of class and rank in Europe, and an inevitable feature of the Indian way of life,—just as the Apostles treated the institution of slavery as an inevitable feature of life in the Roman Empire, and did not oppose it. Nor was this view an innovation. It had already been recognized in Malabar, where the Syrian Christians and the Christian Mukkavars formed distinct communities. This is what he himself wrote in a letter of 1609:

> By becoming a Christian one does not renounce his caste, nobility or usages. The idea that Christianity interferes with them has been impressed upon the people by the devil, and is the great obstacle to Christianity. It is this that has stricken the work of Fr. Fernandez with sterility.[1]

Because of his success and the need to preserve and hand on the inside knowledge of Hindu life and thought that he, the pioneer, was acquiring, de Nobili asked for a companion to be sent to him. Fr. Leitao, who was sent in 1609, was unable to stand the rigours of the life; but Fr. Vico, who came in 1610, stayed and became a devoted colleague.

It was not all plain sailing. From time to time opposition arose in Madura. Once de Nobili's teaching was publicly called in question before a large assembly of Brahmins with a view to his expulsion. Once he was about to be expelled as a Turk, and his pandit was threatened with violence. But there were those who took his part, so that he came through. An accusation that tended to recur was that he was in fact a Parangi. There was trouble over this in 1610, when a Parava Christian told de Nobili's converts that by their baptism they had lost caste and become Parangis too. This caused alarm and suspicion, and some of his disciples seceded. De Nobili's reply was to make a public declaration that he was not a Parangi but a sannyasi from Rome, where his family held a rank corresponding to that of rajahs in India, that the religion which he taught did not require a man to renounce his caste and was not peculiar to the Parangis.[2] He wrote it out on palm leaves and had it fixed to a tree, where passers-by might read it. In saying that he was not a Parangi he meant that he was neither a Portuguese nor a Parangi in the bad meaning the word had in popular use. This was true; but Portuguese churchmen would not be pleased to hear of this Italian's having distinguished himself from them in so pointed a fashion.

The manifesto was effective in rallying the disciples; but already a different sort of opposition was arising which would not be so easily dealt with. Its source was Fr. Fernandez. From the very beginning he had disliked de Nobili's methods, and had said so to his superiors. The Provincial and the Archbishop

[1] Quoted in J. S. Chandler: *The History of the Jesuit Mission in Madura, S. India, in the 17th and 18th Centuries*, p. 14.

[2] For the full text see Vincent Cronin: *A Pearl to India*, pp. 136-138.

however did not agree with him, for de Nobili had their full approval in all that he had done. Laerzio spent a month with him in 1608 dressed as a sannyasi and sharing the regime, and expressed himself delighted at what he saw. As long as he was in office, complaints were fruitless; but rumours of strange doings at Madura began to circulate among the clergy at Goa and along the coast, and there the majority were inclined to take Fernandez's point of view. The matter came to a head in 1610, when Fernandez wrote a long complaint to a newly appointed Visitor, Nicholas Pimenta, who was of his way of thinking. The gist of his accusations was that de Nobili was guilty of dissimulation in repudiating the name Parangi, that he was corrupting Christianity by admitting Hindu practices into it, and that by keeping his converts separate he was making a schism. Pimenta, having consulted theologians in Goa, sent an adverse report to the General of the Society in Rome advising that the Madura Mission be suppressed. De Nobili, when he was informed of this, drew up and sent to Rome his *Answer*, in which he defended himself against the accusations and argued skillfully for his method of 'accommodation', as it came to be called. Communications were so slow in those days that the General's reply was not received in India till 1613. In it he appeared to condemn some of the practices in question, but added a proviso that care should be taken not to make such changes as would ruin the mission. Meanwhile Laerzio had been succeeded as Provincial by a man strongly opposed to de Nobili. When the reply came, this man (Pero) ordered de Nobili to abandon his methods, and forbade him and Vico to baptize any more converts till this had been done. De Nobili however, basing himself on the proviso, disputed the interpretation of the General's letter. Thus further correspondence with Rome became necessary, and the controversy went on. In the course of it the issue was narrowed down to four points: whether high caste converts might wear the cord, the hair-tuft and the sandal paste and continue their customary bathing; that some measure of social distinction based on caste would have to be accepted seems to have been generally admitted.

Though there was a slight reaction in de Nobili's favour in India after Pero's death in 1615, the Archbishop of Goa was hostile. He applied to Pope Paul V for permission to take strong action. But at Rome de Nobili's arguments had begun to take effect, so that the reply was an order to re-examine the matter and

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see whether the disputed practices could be purged of superstitious elements and retained, in order to facilitate conversions. Accordingly the question was debated at a conference held at Goa in 1619, de Nobili and his supporter Archbishop Roz, now an old man, being present. Although memoranda by de Nobili and Roz circulated before the meeting caused certain important members to change their mind, the accommodation method was condemned by the majority. However the last word remained with Rome, and there, after a commission of theologians had reported, Pope Gregory XV finally came down on the side of de Nobili in 1623. The decision was that Brahmins and other high caste converts might use the external marks of their noble rank (cord, hair-tuft, sandal paste); but must give up the Hindu ceremonies and *mantrams* connected with them. The cord must be received from a Christian priest with Christian prayers. Baths and sandal paste must be used for cleanliness and personal adornment only, without *mantrams*.[1] This reached India in 1624, and so after fourteen years de Nobili won his case and was free to carry on his work without restriction. The ban on baptisms was lifted.

Now that the mission was no longer in jeopardy, de Nobili began to extend his work to other places. Some of his converts who were employed in the service of the king had moved to Trichinopoly, when the king made it his headquarters for his compaigns against the kingdom of Tanjore, and de Nobili had already visited them twice in 1617. Now (1623), leaving Vico in charge of the church at Madura, he set out for Trichinopoly again, and from there went on to Salem, where, though he was not welcomed at first, one of the leading men became his host, and people began coming to him for religious and philosophical discussions as they had done in Madura. His next few years were spent in the area of Salem, Trichinopoly and Moramangalam. On Christmas Day 1625 he baptized Tirumangala Nayak, the deposed ruler of Sendamangalam, with his wife, mother and children. In the same year Fr. Emmanuel Martins arrived to join the mission. In this period the work was less among Brahmins than it had been in the early period in Madura; from now onwards it came to be more among the Sudra castes, and even among the Adi Dravidas. This was a surprising development. It came about through the conversion of an Adi Dravida *pandāram* or religious mendicant, who wore the lingam and was

[1] Constitution *Romanae Sedis Antistites*, summarized in Ferroli, II pp. 400 f. Latin extracts *ibid.* I pp. 494-497.

guru to some two thousand disciples, among whom were Sudras as well as Adi Dravidas. This man after reading a book by de Nobili sought him out and wanted to become his disciple. De Nobili was so impressed by him that he began to teach him, and some months later he baptized him with the name Muttiudeyan, or Hilary. Through Hilary's influence many of his former followers became catechumens.

In a mission which took the caste system as seriously as the Madura Mission did, the care of such people as these presented an embarrassing problem. For some time the missionaries tried to solve it by ministering to the higher castes by day and the others by night; but this was unsatisfactory. Then it was decided to appoint special missionaries for work among the lower castes. They were called pandāraswamis, and their position corresponded to that of the non-Brahmin religious mendicants known in the Tamil country as *pandārams*.[1] They lived as sannyasis, and on that account were respected by the upper castes and to a certain extent had access to them, but their main responsibility was for the low castes and Adi Dravidas. The other fathers, known as Brahmin sannyasis, followed the Brahmin way of life and ministered chiefly to Brahmins and the 'twice-born' castes. The first pandāraswami was the Portuguese Fr. Balthasar da Costa, who joined the mission in 1640. He lived a wandering life in the Trichinopoly area, seldom remaining in the same place for more than two months at a time, and made numerous converts among Adi Dravidas and Sudras.

About this time the attitude of the ruling authorities to the foreign sannyasis seems to have taken a turn for the worse, whether because of hostilities between Tirumala Nayak of Madura and the Portuguese (1635-1639) or for some other reason. De Nobili was on good terms with Tirumala Nayak himself; but that did not prevent a subordinate official, Venkataraya Pillai, from persecuting the fathers when the Nayak was absent. In 1640 Martins was expelled from Trichinopoly, and de Nobili himself, who was then at Madura once more, was arrested and imprisoned with Vico's successor, Maya.[2] The church and house were looted, and even when the fathers were released about a year later, the buildings were not given back to them. There was another persecution at Trichinopoly in 1644, when Martins

[1] On these see E. Thurston and K. Rangachari: *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, VI pp. 45-50.

[2] Vico died in 1638.

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and another father were arrested and put in irons, and the church was confiscated.

By this time de Nobili was growing old and had become almost blind. By the Provincial's order he left the mission in 1645 and went to Jaffna in Ceylon, where he spent two years as Superior of the Jesuit mission there. Then he was sent to Mylapore, where he lived in retirement in a hut outside the town, a sannyasi still, until his death in 1656 in his seventy-ninth year.

During his fifty years' service he wrote a number of books in Tamil. His principal work is *Gnānopadēsam*, a full-scale treatise of scholastic theology in five books. Next came *Ātma Nirnayam*, on the origin nature and end of the soul, *Agnāna Nivāranam*, dialogues on God and his attributes, *Dūshana Dhikkāram* and *Punarjanma Ākshēpam*, apologetic works, and others. He also wrote in Sanskrit verse a Life of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and in the same language composed canticles to be sung by the Brahmin Christians of Madura at weddings and funerals. Besides these he wrote hymns in Tamil and Telugu. He is said also to have written a summary of Christian doctrine in a hundred Sanskrit *ślokas*.[1]

For the rest of the seventeenth century and the greater part

[1] On de Nobili's literary works see V. Cronin: *A Pearl to India*, pp. 176-182 and 269 f; also J. L. Miranda: *The Introduction of Christianity into the Heart of India*, pp. 22 f. Rightly or wrongly his name has been connected with certain Sanskrit works written, it would seem, by Jesuit missionaries, in the form of Vedic commentaries. Eight manuscript books of this kind came to light at Pondicherry in the eighteenth century, by which time they had been furnished with a French translation opposite to the Sanskrit text, which was in Roman script. Each bore one or other of the four well known titles: Rig, Yajur, Sama or Atharva Veda. One of these books, entitled in French *L'Ezour Vedam* (i.e. Yajurveda), somehow came into the hands of the celebrated French man of letters, Voltaire, who presented it to the library of the King of France in 1761. It was printed at Paris in 1778 as 'an ancient commentary on the Veda, containing the exposition of the religious and philosophical opinions of the Indians; translated from the Sanskrit by a Brahmin'. It was not until some years afterwards that, on being examined, it was found to be an imitation and thought to have been the work of some missionary. Later a similar verdict was pronounced on the remaining manuscripts in India. The ascription of these works to de Nobili rests on a tradition of the Indian Christians of Pondicherry in the early 19th century; it is not certain that they are his, nor is it known whether the titles are original. On these imitation Vedas see Hough, II pp. 237-240 and appendix C, where a specimen is given in English. Some suppose the author to have been one of the French Jesuits in the 18th century; cf. J. Schmidlin: *Catholic Mission History*, p. 302.

of the eighteenth Jesuit missions were carried on in the inland parts of South India by the methods initiated by de Nobili. The 'residences' (districts having a resident missionary) of the old Madura Mission extended over Tamilnad from Madura to Vellore and from Tanjore to Satyamangalam. In 1648 another mission, that of Mysore, was begun by the Italian Fr. Leonardo Cinnami from Goa. It worked in the south-eastern portion of the present State of Mysore and the adjoining Tamil districts of Salem and Coimbatore. Then in 1689 French Jesuits from Pondicherry began the Mission of the Carnatic. They took over the northern portion of the original Madura Mission (North and South Arcot) and also penetrated into the Telugu country further north (the modern Andhra Pradesh). The Madura Mission was ultimately left with the country from approximately the Cauvery delta southwards. The number of missionaries at work in these large areas at any one time however was never great; in the Madura Mission there were seldom more than ten or twelve. At first they were of the two kinds, Brahmin sannyasis to work among the high castes, and pandāraswamis to work among the Sudras and the depressed classes; but the Brahmin sannyasis were comparatively few. Fr. Arcolini, the last of them, died in 1670, and after that the distinction lapsed.[1] Though de Nobili and Vico had dreamed of a college where Brahmin Christians might be trained for the priesthood, their plan never came to fruition; there was never an Indian clergy, and the lack of it had serious consequences in the eighteenth century, as we shall see. But the few fathers itinerating over the large areas depended greatly on Indian catechists, of whom there were many. Three who were specially eminent were Muttiudeyan (Hilary) the former pandaram, Savari Rayan (Peter Xavier), and Dhairyam (Constant) a former *yogi*. Some catechists travelled from place to place with the missionaries; others looked after local groups of Christians.

After the early days of de Nobili Brahmin converts were few; most of the Christians came from the Sudra castes and the depressed classes. In places where they were of both kinds they all worshipped in one church or chapel (which was a distinct advance on Hindu custom in those days); but the building was so arranged as to keep caste and outcaste apart in separate portions.[2] Baptisms by hundreds and thousands were reported

[1] J. C. Houpert: *A South Indian Mission* (*The Madura Catholic Mission*), p. 48.

[2] See the diagram in Ferroli, II p. 416.

in the Annual Letters; but it is difficult to get a true picture of the actual size of the community. According to Fr. Ferroli the total for five residences at the time of de Nobili's death was 4016.[1] Fr. Houpert estimates the total number of Christians in the Madura Mission in 1700 as about 80,000.[2] There was no breach with caste; socially the people remained assimilated very much to their Hindu neighbours. Even so they were exposed to persecution from time to time.

All the fathers lived a life of renunciation and hardship, and most of them at one time or another had to endure persecution. One of the most distinguished and successful, who endured great sufferings and eventually became a martyr, was St John de Britto, a Portuguese of noble birth and a man conspicuous for his 'apostolic zeal' and 'rare gift of winning souls', who came to India in 1673 and joined the Madura Mission in the following year. The annual report of the Mission for 1683, which was written by him, gives a vivid picture of the life he and the other fathers lived.[3] He was at that time in the residence of Kuttur, which included the kingdoms of Tanjore and Gingee, an area then much oppressed by its rulers and their soldiers. He describes how he camped for a month in the hot weather in a jungle, living under the shelter of a couple of boulders and the tree over them, visited by the Christians from the villages round about, who came to him mostly by night; how his nights were spent in baptizing catechumens, catechizing converts, hearing confessions and saying Mass (in a little hut he had built of branches of trees) early enough to enable the people to set out for their villages before sunrise, and his days in answering the questions of curious non-Christians; how he and eight Indian companions were alarmed by news that soldiers were after them, and hid the vestments among the rocks and prepared for death, but the soldiers, having failed to find them in the half-light before dawn, went away. But it is with the Marava country (Ramnad and Pudukottah) that he is specially associated. There had been a persecution, and no missionary had been there for seven years when he first went there in 1686. After spending three months visiting the Christians and baptizing children and converts,

[1] *ibid.*, p. 415.

[2] *op. cit.*, p. 57.

[3] The main parts of it have been translated and published as a small pamphlet under the title *Madura Mission Annals* by the Catholic Truth Society of India, Tiruchirapalli.

he and his catechists were arrested, beaten, imprisoned and cruelly tortured. Finally they were taken before the Rajah of Ramnad, who questioned them but set them free, forbidding them to enter his country again.

After his release the Provincial sent him on mission business to Portugal. During the two years he was there the King tried hard to retain him as tutor to the young heir to the throne; but de Britto, who had referred the matter to the General of the Society of Jesus, bowed to the General's decision that he should return to India. After arriving at Goa (1691) he refused an offer of the archbishopric of Cranganore and returned to the Madura Mission, where he was appointed Visitor. The same year he entered once more the borders of the Marava country. There was war at that time between Ramnad and Madura. Moving from place to place, now camping in forests, now living in a village where the zemindar was friendly, he exercised an extraordinary influence. People flocked to him; large numbers were baptized; he claimed to have baptized 4000 in the year 1692. Among the converts was a notable man, a prince of Marava, called Tadia Tevar, who had sent for him during an illness. The baptism of this man early in 1693 led to a crisis. Tadia Tevar had five wives; and de Britto insisted that he must keep only the first one and pension the others. This was done, but one of the women, who was related to the Rajah of Ramnad, appealed to her kinsman against de Britto. The result was a general persecution of the Christians. Do Britto was seized by a troop of horsemen. After a beating he and three Christian young men were tied to the tails of horses and dragged off to Ramnad. There the four of them were imprisoned with three catechists brought in from another place. At the interrogation by the Rajah, Tadia Tevar, who was present, was able to save him from instant execution; he was condemned ostensibly to banishment, and sent under a guard of soldiers on a forty mile journey to Oriyur. But the commander there had received orders that he was to be beheaded, and this sentence was publicly carried out on a hillock outside the town on the 4th of February 1693.[1]

Another famous personality of the Madura Mission was

[1] Chandler, *op. cit.*, pp. 57-61; Ferroli, II pp. 80-87. For a short popular Life see *St John de Britto, S. J., Missioner and Martyr*, by J. C. Houpert (C.T.S. of India, Tiruchirapalli). De Britto was canonized in 1947.

the Italian Fr. Constant Joseph Beschi, who served in it from 1711 to 1742, a man of a very different type. He too had his share of hardship and danger, especially in the early years of his service, when he lived a wandering life in districts where the rulers were often hostile; later he won the confidence of the Mogul general Chanda Sahib, who protected him. During the years when Chanda Sahib ruled Trichinopoly (1736-1741) he is even said to have made Fr. Beschi his dewan and assigned to him the revenues of certain villages, which Beschi used for the Mission. From 1717 onwards the main scene of his labours was the region of Trichinopoly and the Cauvery delta, his principal station being Yellakurichi on the north bank of the Coleroon river, where he built a substantial church and established a festival of Our Lady of Refuge, which is still kept there.[1] Both Beschi and his contemporary Fr. Bertoldi, another Italian, who spent forty years in the Mission, used to give retreats based on the *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius to the catechists and some of the leading Christians.

But it is for his literary works that Fr. Beschi is most famous. He became a master of Tamil, and achieved the distinction, marvellous in a foreigner, of composing a long epic poem which is regarded as a classic in that language. This was the *Thembāvani*[2] (the Unfading Garland), a poem of 36 cantos in 3615 four-line stanzas in ornate high Tamil. The subject is the Biblical history of Redemption, beginning in the Old Testament and fulfilled in the birth, ministry, passion and resurrection of our Lord; but this is presented indirectly by means of a life of St Joseph, in the course of which numerous episodes, prophecies and teachings are artificially brought in, after the manner of epic poetry. For example, during the journey of the Holy Family to Egypt St Michael appears and relates the history of the Exodus, and on the return, as they pass near Mount Moriah, the infant Christ is made to recall the sacrifice of Isaac and to foretell his own sacrifice.

[1] This was part of an attempt to rally the Roman Catholic flock during a famine in 1728-29, when some of them were being attracted to the Protestant Mission at Tranquebar; on which see chapter VIII.

[2] A short synopsis of the argument of the *Thembāvani* canto by canto is given in J. C. Houpert's booklet, *Father C. J. Beschi, S. J.*, pp. 30-33. An earlier work, similar in scope but more popular in style, is the *Christian Purana* of the English Jesuit Fr. Thomas Stephens, published at Goa in 1616. This is in Marathi. On Stephens, the first English missionary in India, see Ferroli, I pp. 451-456.

Besides his poetical works Fr. Beschi also wrote in prose. Those were the days of the first Protestant Mission in Tranquebar whose history will occupy us in the next chapter. When the authorities of the Madura Mission were concerned at the effect of Protestant teaching and books on their people, Beschi was called upon to reply; which he did in his *Veda Vilakkam* (Explanation of Religion). For the guidance of catechists he wrote *Vediar Olukkam* (Rule for Catechists). Besides these he produced dictionaries and grammars of the Tamil language. That he could also write in lighter vein is suggested to non-Tamilians by the title given to an English translation of his *Paramartha Guruvin Kadey* (Tale of Guru Paramarthan), 'Strange Surprising Adventures of the Venerable Gooroo Simple and his Five Disciples, Noodle, Doodle, Wiseacre, Zany and Foozle.'[1]

Through these and other men with the help of Indian catechists the work went on through many vicissitudes but also with much success. Great numbers were baptized, often perhaps without much preparation; but it often happened, whether from the fewness of the fathers and the great distances to be covered or the disturbed state of the country, that the Christians were left unvisited by a priest for years together. In some districts, where disorder was prevalent or the rulers hostile, Christianity took on almost the appearance of a secret society, the sannyasi missionary on his visits having to hide in out of the way places where the people came to him by night; in other places, which were safer, churches could be built and a more normal life was possible.

But the criticism started by Fr. Fernandez of Madura also continued. Though the papal Brief of 1623 had ended the first phase of the controversy, the critics were far from taking that as the last word on what came to be known as the 'Malabar rites.'[2] The objection was that the Jesuits by their method of 'accommodation' were assimilating Christianity too closely to Hinduism; to which they replied that in large measure the customs and prejudices of the country must be accepted, at least until the Church was firmly and widely established, otherwise the Hindus would not accept Christianity. A similar

[1] On Fr. Beschi see Ferroli, II pp. 298-314, and Fr. Houpert's booklet mentioned above.

[2] In this expression 'Malabar' is used loosely for South India in general, and 'rites' covers social customs of other kinds besides particular religious ceremonies.

dispute had arisen in China. From both countries complaints were reaching Rome in increasing volume at the end of the seventeenth century, with the result that a second phase of the 'rites controversy', as it is called, began. Nor was this purely a question of missionary methods; dislike of the Society of Jesus also played an important part. So far as India was concerned, the matter was brought to a head by a written indictment of the Jesuits sent to Rome by the Capuchins of Pondicherry.[1] Hoping to settle the matter once and for all, Pope Clement XI in 1703 sent out a special legate, the Patriarch de Tournon,[2] with power to make inquiry on the spot both in India and China and give decisions. De Tournon, a young and somewhat impetuous Frenchman, who had had no experience of either country or of the question at issue, came to Pondicherry and stayed there eight months, during most of which time he had the misfortune to be ill. In 1704, after conferring with the accusers of the Jesuits and interviewing some of the missionaries, he issued a decree condemning specifically sixteen practices of 'accommodation', of which complaint had been made. They were to be abandoned forthwith. The Mission Superiors on pain of excommunication were to see that the decree was kept, and any missionaries refusing were to be suspended. The forbidden practices included, among others, the following: the omission in Baptism (as offensive to Indian taste) of the preliminary ceremonies in which the priest breathes on the candidate, puts salt in his mouth and touches his upper lip and ears with a thumb moistened with saliva;[3] the giving of Hindu names; child marriages; the breaking of a coconut to bring good luck or avert misfortune; forbidding women to come to confession or church during their monthly periods;[4] the public celebration of a girl's arrival at puberty; the refusal to enter the huts of depressed class Christians when visiting them in sickness; allowing Christian musicians to play and dance at Hindu festivals; the use of caste marks and letting the Christians read Hindu books.[5]

Then began a long struggle. The Jesuits, convinced that a

[1] J. Schmidlin: *Catholic Mission History*, p. 481. The Capuchins are a branch of the Franciscan Order.

[2] He was Roman Catholic Patriarch of Antioch.

[3] These are survivals of the exorcisms used in the ancient rites of the catechumenate in Rome; on which see L. Duchesne: *Christian Worship*, chapter IX. It is easy to see why the Jesuits omitted them in India.

[4] The Jesuits always denied that they forbade them.

[5] Ferroli, II pp. 430 f.

sudden attempt to break established customs would provoke opposition and ruin their missions, strove to get the decree modified or at least postponed. They sent a delegation to Rome to appeal against it, and meanwhile in India they ignored it, claiming that the legate had given them a verbal assurance of postponement. They were able to do this and to escape the penalties because they had the support of the Portuguese bishops, who refused to acknowledge the decree. Here we must note another complicating feature of the controversy, namely Portuguese resentment of Rome's attempt to act in India independently of the padroado. Portugal claimed ecclesiastical jurisdiction throughout India, and Portugal had not been consulted about the legate's mission. The Pope confirmed the decree, and the Jesuit delegation failed to get any official modification; but they affirmed that the Pope had assured them verbally that the most difficult provisions might be postponed. Hence the situation in India remained as before. For another thirty years the controversy continued, the Capuchins and others denouncing the Jesuits, the padroado bishops unwilling to enforce the censures against them, the Jesuits still trying to press their case at Rome and obtain concessions, the Popes confirming the decree. In 1734 Clement XII did make some concessions, toning down some expressions and allowing the saliva ceremony to be omitted for ten years and the breathing to be done in private; but he stood firm on the main points. In 1739 he required the missionaries to take an oath that they would obey. These Bulls were promulgated in India, and by this time the Jesuits were being urged by their own General to obey. It seems that some did, but not all. Doubtless unwillingness on the part of the people to change their customs contributed to make the effect indecisive. In 1744 Benedict XIV issued the Bull (*Omnium Sollicitudinum*) which was destined to be the last on the subject. In it he recapitulated the previous history of the question, confirmed the earlier decisions and insisted that the Jesuits either comply or be repatriated from India. This Bull however contained two concessions. One renewed for another ten years, where necessary, the dispensation from the baptismal ceremonies. The other, which is more surprising, approved a proposal that certain priests should be set apart to minister to the depressed classes only, as if the old ministry of the pandārəswamis were to be revived in a more restricted form. After this there was no more opposition.[1]

[1] Ferroli, II pp. 442-457, 474-486; Schmidlin, pp. 478-483.

Fifteen years later a calamity overtook the Jesuits in India from a wholly unexpected quarter,—the government of Portugal. For a number of years an antipathy to the Society of Jesus had been growing up in Europe for a variety of reasons, one being the great influence it had acquired in public affairs. In Portugal the Jesuits were accused of sedition and of plotting against the life of the king, and in 1759 the government ordered the suppression of the Society in Portugal and its overseas territories. France did likewise in 1764; then Spain in 1767. Then these governments brought pressure to bear on the Pope, with the result that in 1773 Pope Clement XIV ordered the suppression of the whole Society.[1] Forty years were to pass before it was allowed to be started again.

After the suppression of 1759 the Jesuits in Portuguese India were arrested and deported, to be imprisoned like criminals. Those who were in the interior remained, and continued till death; but no new ones could come to replace them, and of course mission funds were cut off. After the suppression of 1773 there was no longer a Society for them to belong to. These events seriously weakened the missions, and their effect was all the greater because there was no indigenous clergy to fill the vacant places, as the number of missionaries declined. Only the catechists remained. A few Goan priests were sent from the West Coast; but they were quite unused to the conditions in these missions. From 1776 the chief responsibility for the Madura, Mysore and Carnatic Missions was entrusted to the Paris Society for Foreign Missions, based on Pondicherry. The ex-Jesuits surviving in these missions joined the Paris Society, which was not able to do more on its own part than send out a vicar apostolic and five or six secular priests. Thus there was very great difficulty in carrying on a reduced work; and, to make matters worse, this was the time of the Mysore Wars and the persecutions of Tippoo Sultan. Many Christians lapsed into Hinduism and many were forcibly converted to Islam.

One of the secular priests sent out by the Paris Society was the Abbé J. A. Dubois, well-known for his book *Hindu Manners Customs and Ceremonies* and for the extremely pessimistic views which he expressed after thirty years in the country about the state and prospects of Christianity in India. Dubois was in India from 1792 to 1823, first in the Tamil country but after 1799

[1] It continued to exist however in Russia (White Russia) and Prussia (Silesia), whose sovereigns protected it.

in Mysore, whither he was sent after Tippoo's defeat to rehabilitate the mixed multitude of Christians carried off from the West Coast and to revive the Mission in Mysore State. Doubtless he exaggerates, and one must make allowance for his unsanguine temperament; but it seems possible to catch a glimpse through his eyes of the kind of community left behind by the Jesuit missions and the troubles of the late eighteenth century. Take for example his description of an up-country congregation celebrating a saint's day:

> Accompanied with hundreds (?) of tom-toms, trumpets, and . . . discordant noisy music . . .; with numberless torches and fireworks: the statue of the saint placed on a car which is charged with garlands of flowers and other gaudy ornaments . . ., the car slowly dragged by a multitude shouting all along the march—the congregation surrounding the car all in a confusion, several among them dancing, or playing with small sticks, or with naked swords: some wrestling, some playing the fool; all shouting or conversing with each other, without anyone exhibiting the least sign of respect or devotion. Such is the mode in which the Hindoo Christians in the inland country celebrate their festivals.[1]

He adds that 'they are celebrated with a little more decency on the coast'.

From such a description as this, and other indications,[2] it is evident that after the Bull of 1744, after the suppression of the Society of Jesus, even after the end of the eighteenth century there remained among the people a large measure of assimilation to Hindu practice, caste included; for a community used to these things could not easily change its ways. Dubois might disapprove of what he saw; but, as he confesses further on in the passage from which we have just quoted, his efforts to dissuade the people were so fruitless that he soon abandoned them. Thus in practice a good many of the results of the method of accommodation had to be accepted.

De Nobili and his successors made a bold experiment. It is impossible not to admire their courage and devotion and endurance. They chose a hard way, and they denied themselves and bore the suffering it involved. It is impossible also not to sym-

[1] Quoted in Hough, II p. 498, from Dubois' *Letters on the State of Christianity in India*, pp. 68-71.

[2] Cf. Ferroli, II pp. 458-461, 466-468.

pathize with their aim of freeing Christianity from the reproach of foreignness, for even now in the twentieth century that reproach is still one of its greatest handicaps. But it is generally agreed that they went too far, and that their greatest weakness was the taking of the caste system into the Church practically unchanged. Whether there was in fact in the seventeenth century a middle way between that and the kind of Parangi-Church which de Nobili wished to avoid may be doubted. This may be urged as his justification for having made the experiment; but it left the Roman Church with an embarrassing legacy. Nor can the Protestant Churches afford to point the finger of scorn, for they have had to allow caste distinctions themselves or to be embarrassed by evidences of their continued presence after being theoretically repudiated. Caste is bound to have some effect on a Church living in an environment dominated by caste, and not all its effects are bad. The problem is where to draw the line between a harmless social custom or an unavoidable cultural difference and something which really destroys the Church's unity in Christ. If it has become a little less difficult in our times, that is because the passage of generations in the Church does tend to lessen the consciousness of origin among many Christian families, and modern education and town life tend to lessen the more obvious cultural differences. Nowadays there is also beginning to be a secular reaction against the idea of caste. Things were very different in de Nobili's day. He saw the need and made his venture and in some respects his judgement may have been at fault; still it remains true that his is the only thorough-going attempt to indianize Christianity that has yet been made. Let us honour him for that.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FIRST PROTESTANT MISSION

IT WAS early in the eighteenth century, while the Jesuits were still carrying on their work in Tamilnad, that Protestant missionaries first appeared in India—also in Tamilnad.

During the previous century trading companies of other European nations besides Portugal had established stations in India. Most of the newcomers were Protestants, and many of their stations were along the east coast. The Dutch settled at Pulicat (1609), Sadras (1647) and Negapatam (1660);[1] the British at Masulipatam (1622), Madras (1639), Cuddalore (1683) and Calcutta (1689); the French at Pondicherry (1674); the Danes at two places whose names are household words in Indian Church History: Tranquebar (Tarangambāḍi), in what is now the Tanjore District of Madras State (1620), and Serampore (1676), in Bengal near Calcutta.[2] The French were Roman Catholics; but the rest were Protestants, and it was in their stations that Protestant mission work began. Not that it was in any way their policy to spread Protestant Christianity among the people of India. Far from it; they had no such intention. Their sole aim was trade and profit. They brought out chaplains to minister to their own people; but, unless an individual here and there interested himself in some of the Indians with whom he came in contact, they made no attempt to spread the Faith.

In this they were not different from most other Protestants; for the Protestant Churches of Europe, though they had been in existence since the early sixteenth century, were slow to recognize any obligation to preach the gospel to non-Christians. For the first century and a half after Martin Luther's revolt against the Pope they had been mainly occupied with their own religious and political struggles: the struggle for existence against the Roman Church and the governments supporting it, and the contentions of the different Protestant sects with one another. The Romans continued their missions in non-Christian lands throughout this period; but the Protestants' horizon was long limited to 'Christendom', a European civilization in which Christianity was the only religion, but different forms of it were at strife among themselves. At length a few men did begin to

[1] They took Negapatam from the Portuguese.

[2] The settlement at Serampore was given up in 1714, but was re-established in 1755. *Encyclopedia Britannica, s.v.* Serampore. I owe this reference to the Rev. E. L. Wenger.

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be aware of the obligation. In England the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (S.P.C.K.) was formed by some members of the Church of England in 1698, with the object, not only of maintaining charity schools and distributing the Bible and other Christian literature in England and Wales, but also of 'promoting Christian knowledge both at home and in the other parts of the world by the best means that should offer'. In 1701 the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts (S.P.G.) was founded. This Society, which had the official backing of the Church of England and was incorporated by royal charter, had as its professed aim both to provide Anglican ministrations to British people abroad, and to evangelize the non-Christian races of the world.

But the man who first conceived the idea of sending Protestant missionaries to India was King Frederick IV of Denmark, a Lutheran. His court chaplain, to whom he assigned the task of finding suitable men, not having been able to find any in Denmark, applied to his friends in Germany; and there two young theological students, Bartholomew Ziegenbalg and Henry Pluetschau, agreed to go. They were products of a revival movement called Pietism, which had begun in the Lutheran Church in Germany in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, stressing personal devotion as against the prevailing emphasis on correct doctrine. One of the Pietist leaders was Professor A. H. Francke, under whom these two young men had studied at the university of Halle, the centre of the movement. They were brought to Denmark and ordained, not without objection, for the Lutheran bishop in that country, together with many other clergy in the Lutheran Church, was critical of Pietism. They were then sent out to Tranquebar as 'royal missionaries' at the personal expense of the King. So it came about that the first Protestant missionaries to India were German Lutherans sent by a King of Denmark. They arrived at Tranquebar on the 9th of July 1706.

The authorities there had not been advised of their coming, and the account of them given by the captain of the ship, who had personal reasons for disliking them, was unfavourable. It soon became clear that no welcome awaited them. It was three days before they could get a boat to take them ashore from the ship, and when at last they did get to land and presented themselves at the entrance to the fort with their papers addressed to the Danish commandant, these were taken from them and they were kept waiting there from ten o'clock in the morning

until four in the afternoon. Then the commandant, J. C. Hassius, appeared with some members of the council and the two Danish chaplains of the place, to ask them their business. Receiving a grudging permission to enter, they followed the official party to the market-place, only to be left there standing in the street; where they might have remained all night but for a junior official who took pity on them and led them to the house of his wife's parents. A few days later this family found them a house in the 'Portuguese' (i.e. Eurasian) quarter.

They began their work by setting themselves to learn Portuguese and Tamil; Portuguese because it was the common language then in use in the European trading stations of South India, Tamil because it was the language of the people. They also found a sphere of work among the many German soldiers serving in the Danish East India Company's troops, for whom they were able to hold services in their own language. Another sphere of work which they found for themselves was among the domestic servants of the Europeans. They managed to prevail upon the commandant to issue orders that these people were to be given leave for two hours every day to receive Christian teaching. Though it may be supposed that such an order was only partially complied with, it was among these people that the missionaries found their first catechumens. These, five in number, they began to teach in their house in Portuguese in November 1706. In the following May they were examined in the Danish Church 'in all the Articles of the Faith' and baptized. Also the missionaries used to 'adopt' orphan children by purchasing them from their guardians. In this way the nucleus of a small orphanage was formed. The children were baptized and brought up as Christians. They were also taught German. A Portuguese and a Tamil school were started. As soon as he was able, Ziegenbalg entered into religious discussions with Hindus in Tamil, and began to preach to them. Since a European who could speak Tamil and was interested in discussing Hindu religious beliefs was a rarity in those days, he did not lack an audience. News of him spread in the country round about, and many came to see him and talk with him. By one means and another a little congregation was formed, and as early as August 1707 a small mission church was built outside the fort. The first Tamil converts, nine in number, were baptized in the following month.

Fortunately Ziegenbalg had the gift of learning languages. Thanks to this and his methodical habits he was able to use

Tamil effectively within a year. As his progress was much more rapid than Pluetschau's, it was natural that he should concentrate more on the Tamil work and Pluetschau on the Portuguese. Quite early he began to write in Tamil, not of course without Indian help. He began by producing a translation of Luther's Short Catechism for use in catechizing the children. This was followed by sermons, tracts and school books. Within two years of his arrival he began to translate the New Testament, a thing which apparently no one had ever attempted in any Indian language before. The publication of these books and pamphlets was made easier by the gift of a printing press sent out from Europe in 1712; before that copies had to be made by hand. For the rest of his life Ziegenbalg remained an assiduous writer. Besides his Biblical translations (in which by the time of his death he had finished the New Testament and gone as far as the book of Ruth in the Old) and his other Tamil works, he found time to compile a Tamil-German dictionary and to write out in German the results of his inquiries into South Indian Hinduism. The German manuscripts were not published until over a century later.

There were many difficulties to contend with, but the most serious was the hostility of Hassius, the commandant. Relations between him and the missionaries were bad from the beginning. Hassius had little or no sympathy with what they were trying to do, and he resented the fact that they had been sent out by the direct authority of the King and thus were able to claim a certain independence. He thought them officious and insubordinate; they found him spiteful and tyrannical. There were frequent collisions, in which, it may be, Ziegenbalg and Pluetschau were sometimes too outspoken; but, whatever the provocation, Hassius certainly treated them outrageously. The worst incident took place in November 1708, when Hassius, enraged at a letter written by Ziegenbalg in the course of his efforts to obtain justice for a certain widow, had him arrested and kept in solitary confinement in the fort for four months. Meanwhile Pluetschau and his helpers and some members of the congregation were harassed in other ways. Eventually public opinion turned against the commandant and made him realize that he had gone too far. He and his wife visited Ziegenbalg in his cell; a long discussion took place, after which Ziegenbalg, on signing a petition asking for release and stating that he was willing to appear in court to be tried for his supposed offence, was set free.

Letters written by Ziegenbalg and Pluetschau about their first impressions and their plans for the future had been published in Germany and had aroused much interest. (They did not include a letter written to the King in 1707 complaining of the behaviour of the commandant, for Hassius at the time deceived the missionaries by an offer of friendship, and the letter was not sent.) The fruit of this interest was seen in the arrival of three more missionaries, Gruendler, Jordan and Boevingh, at Tranquebar in 1709.[1] They brought with them a large sum of money and other supplies for the mission, and clear instructions from the King to the commandant that his missionaries were to be given all necessary assistance and protection. Out of this money a large house and compound, sufficient for all the missionaries and three schools, Tamil, Portuguese and Danish, was bought, so that the work began to take a more solid and organized form. A garden too was bought at the village of Poraiyar, which later became an outstation of the mission. The interest in Europe continued to increase and spread to England, where the S.P.C.K., though not sending out missionaries, gave valuable help by raising funds and by printing and supplying books, such as Portuguese New Testaments, for use in India. The printing press that was set up at Tranquebar in 1712 was the gift of this society. In the same year the Danish King made a permanent arrangement for the finances of his mission by causing an annual grant of 2000 dollars to be set aside for it out of the postal revenues. In 1714 he set up a Mission Board in Copenhagen. Thus the organization in the West took shape. It was a curious three-cornered arrangement. The Board in Denmark administered; most of the candidates (not all) came from the university of Halle in Germany; and additional help in money and materials was provided by the Anglican S.P.C.K. in England. In Tranquebar the policy and routine of the work are indicated in a letter written by Gruendler in 1713.[2] After prayer and the preaching of the Gospel in the language of the people the points he chiefly emphasizes are: the establishment of charity schools to give a Christian training to the rising generation and prepare workers for the Church and the schools, the printing and distribution of

[1] Boevingh brought discord into the mission circle by disagreeing sharply with Ziegenbalg and, for a time, setting even Pluetschau against him. He left Tranquebar in 1711. Some of his criticisms expressed in letters home got into print and did harm.

[2] See E. A. Lehmann: *It Began at Tranquebar*, p. 109.

Christian literature, regular catechizing of the Christians by Indian catechists going from house to house, and weekly conferences of the missionaries and Indian workers, in which reports are made of work done and fresh instructions are given. The aim of all this is said to be not the mere growth of numbers or outward acceptance of the Christian religion, but a real change of heart, a genuine knowledge of Christian truth and a godly life.

One of the more notable converts at Tranquebar was a young man called Kanabadi Vathiar, who was baptized in 1709. He was a son of Ziegenbalg's munshi, and had himself helped him in his language study and in the translation of the Catechism and other Christian tracts. It was through this work that he became interested in Christianity. He was also employed as a teacher in the school, where, even before he became a Christian, he used his poetical gifts to turn the Catechism and the Gospel story into Tamil verses, which he taught the children to sing,—a pleasing instance of something Indian in a setting which otherwise was heavily western. Kanabadi Vathiar like many other converts had to endure bitter opposition from his people. They alternately threatened and cajoled, and at one time it was suspected that he had been poisoned. After his baptism he left Tranquebar for a time; but he returned when the storm blew over, and continued to work as a teacher.

After the reinforcements of 1709 had arrived, Ziegenbalg began to think of finding other centres of work outside Tranquebar and beyond the reach of the Danish authorities there. Besides visiting Negapatam, a short distance to the south, he made longer journeys northwards as far as Madras, which he visited more than once and where he was hospitably received by the English chaplains, who were in correspondence with the S.P.C.K. In Tranquebar itself the hostility of the commandant and behind him the suspicious and restrictive policy of the Company still continued, and it seemed as if the Mission would never have full freedom until something was done in Denmark itself to remove misunderstandings and place matters on a better footing. Ziegenbalg himself had planned to go in 1709; but Hassius had refused him a passage in a Danish ship. Pluetschau went in 1711, but was not able to accomplish very much. Hassius meanwhile had got into trouble. In 1714 he was glad to make peace with Ziegenbalg, and in that year Ziegenbalg sailed. On arrival he found that he had been appointed Provost of the Mission. He saw the King and was able to make known to him and to others

his view of the state of affairs at Tranquebar,—for other reports had reached Denmark besides those of the missionaries.[1] After a hard struggle the directors of the Company withdrew all orders hampering the activities of the Mission. Hassius was replaced by another commandant. Ziegenbalg made a tour of Germany, during which he married a wife, and then he returned to India by way of England, sailing in an English ship to Madras. He reached Tranquebar at the end of August 1716.

As if to celebrate the new state of affairs, the first project to be undertaken after his return was the building of a new church. This was the New Jerusalem church, which is still in use. Another new project in the same year was a training school for teachers and catechists.

Unfortunately the next four or five years were clouded by a controversy with the secretary of the Mission Board in Copenhagen, a man called Wendt. This man, alarmed at the rising costs of the work, developed strong ideas of his own on mission policy, which he proceeded to force upon Ziegenbalg and Gruendler. He was against the acquisition of property and the building of houses and schools and churches with money sent from the West, and likewise against the financial help that the missionaries had felt obliged to give to the Christians. He urged that the missionaries should devote themselves wholly to 'spiritual work', going about among the non-Christians preaching the Gospel, and that the Indian Church itself should be responsible for supplying its own material needs. He even objected to raising the stipends of the missionaries, now that both Ziegenbalg and Gruendler were married. That there was some point in his criticisms is suggested by the remark of one of the later missionaries towards the end of the century, that 'the Tranquebar Mission was nothing but a great almshouse;'[2] and since then we have had plenty of time in which to become aware of the ill effects of an excessive reliance on foreign money. But Wendt

[1] There are two sides to every medal. What the other side of this one looked like may be judged from the following, which appeared in print in Denmark in 1715, while Ziegenbalg was there: 'The first congregation consisted of slaves and former Catholics, of poor people, and even children bought with much money. The missionaries had through their oily smooth words extracted from sympathetic people a fair sum of money to take to India, and thus made many *fanam*-Christians, whose Christianity would last only as long as the missionaries had money.' E. A. Lehmann, *op. cit.*, p. 42 (one phrase amended).

[2] J. Richter: *A History of Missions in India*, p. 163.

was a theorist wholly out of touch with the actual situation. Ziegenbalg had to remind him that they were dealing with people so poor that they could not afford even a piece of white cloth in which to wrap a child brought for Baptism, and that in such circumstances it was impossible to make a rigid distinction between the spiritual and the material. But his remonstrances had no effect. Wendt stopped the grants.

Deeply depressed by this controversy, Ziegenbalg became ill, and in February 1719 he died at the early age of thirty-six. Gruendler too died thirteen months later, leaving the direction of the Mission in the hands of three young men who had been in the country only six months. These two deaths had a sobering effect in Denmark. The King removed Wendt from office.

In the crisis caused by the loss of Ziegenbalg and Gruendler no immediate expansion of work was possible. There was another crisis too. Schultze, who assumed the leadership among the newcomers, caused a disturbance in the Tamil congregation by a well-meaning but rash attack on caste in the church. The earlier missionaries, like the Roman Catholics before them, had recognized among the converts a distinction between those who came from various Sudra castes and those from the castes now known as 'scheduled'. In the New Jerusalem church, which was cruciform, the Sudra men sat on one side of the nave and the others on the other; and likewise the Sudra women in one of the transepts and the other women in the other; at Holy Communion all the Sudras, men and women, communicated first and the others afterwards. A similar distinction was observed in school, though the missionaries had tried to mitigate it by teaching the more intelligent of the Adi Dravida children Portuguese and dressing them in western clothes, so that in time they came to rank as 'Portuguese.'[1] Schultze tried to stop the distinction by order; but the only result was opposition and discontent. In the end, after he had left Tranquebar, the new missionaries, Walther and Pressier, who arrived in 1725, made peace by frankly restoring the old practice.

In the following years the influence of the Tranquebar Mission spread out into the adjacent kingdom of Tanjore, an area in which there were already many Roman Catholic Christians, the products of the Jesuit Mission described in the last chapter. Five

[1] Richter, *op. cit.*, p. 108. At this period Indo-Europeans were commonly known as 'Portuguese' on the Coromandel coast, whether they actually had Portuguese blood in them or not.

'circles' came to be recognized as containing groups or families in the charge of catechists. Many of these people, though by no means all, were former Roman Catholics who had been attracted to Protestantism through reading books printed at the mission press or through the persuasion of those who had already become Protestants. Prominent among such was Rajanaiken, a Roman Catholic of Adi Dravida origin serving as a petty officer in the army of the Rajah of Tanjore. Though he had never been to school, he had learnt to read and was an eager reader of any Christian books he could get. Having become interested in Protestant teaching through reading Ziegenbalg's New Testament and Catechism, he visited Tranquebar, became friendly with the missionaries and ended by joining their Church. Afterwards he became very zealous in communicating his beliefs to others, Hindus as well as Roman Catholics, both in Tanjore and in the Ramnad area also when he was sent on duty there. Finally, after returning to Tanjore, he left the army and was made a catechist and given charge of the Protestant Christians in that area. Through him many others became Protestants. One of his disciples was Sattianaden, the son of a Roman catechist. Under Rajanaiken's influence both father and son became Protestants. The father returned to the Roman Church, but the son became a catechist of the Tranquebar Mission. All these defections were naturally most unwelcome to the Romans, among whom Fr. Beschi in particular aid all he could by his writings and in other ways to check the spread of what he called 'the Lutheran swarm.'[1] Rajanaiken and others met with violent opposition.

It was this growing activity in the Tanjore country that led to the ordination of the first Indian pastor. This was Aaron, one of the senior catechists. The son of a Hindu merchant of Cuddalore, he had been baptized as a young man by Ziegenbalg, and had worked as teacher and catechist for fifteen years. He was ordained in December 1733, and appointed pastor of the Mayavaram 'circle', where he ministered until his death in 1745. Another catechist, Diogo, who came of a Roman Catholic family but had been brought up in the mission school at Tranquebar, was ordained in 1741 and appointed to the 'circles' of Tanjore, Tirupalatur and Kumbakonam. Other ordinations followed at intervals. In all fourteen Indian ministers were ordained in the old Tranquebar Mission.

[1] The reference is to a polemical pamphlet written by him, in which the Lutherans are compared to the swarm of locusts in the book of Revelation IX 1-5. Richter, p. 112.

Through missionaries of this Mission, Protestant mission work was started in other European stations in South India, such as Madras, Cuddalore, Negapatam and Trichinopoly. In Madras regular work began in 1726, when Schultze removed there from Tranquebar and opened two small schools. The S.P.C.K. having undertaken financial responsibility for his support, this mission was known to Copenhagen and Halle as 'the English mission'; but Schultze and his successors for upwards of eighty years were all German Lutherans recruited from Halle. The anomaly of an Anglican society supporting Lutheran ministers caused no qualms in the eighteenth century. The chief name in the history of the Madras mission in this period is that of Philipp Fabricius. His long ministry of forty-six years (1742-1788) well illustrates the vicissitudes which the frequent wars of the eighteenth century could cause, even in the comparative security of an English settlement. Twice, when the French attacked Madras in 1746 and 1758, he and his flock fled to Pulicat; on the first occasion it was three years before they could return; and again in 1780, when Hyder Ali's cavalry were laying waste the country, they had to take refuge within the walls of Fort St George. Yet the ill winds sometimes blew good to them. In 1752 the English authorities made over to Fabricius the church and other property in the suburb of Vepery which they had confiscated from the Roman Catholics whom they had expelled from Madras as sympathizers with the French; and in 1761 they presented him with a printing press captured from Pondicherry. This press was set up on the mission compound in Vepery, where the Diocesan Press of the Christian Literature Society still continues its work. But the fame of Fabricius rests on his literary works, especially his Tamil translations of German hymns (1774), his Dictionary (Tamil-English 1779, English-Tamil 1786), long a standard work, and above all his version of the Tamil Bible (New Testament 1772, the whole Bible 1796), which became a classic greatly beloved by the Lutheran Christians. Unfortunately he became involved in money-lending with funds deposited with him in Madras for safe custody, and towards the end of his life he got into difficulties which led to his being imprisoned for debt and becoming a cause of scandal.

Of all the missionaries connected with the Tranquebar Mission the best known, both in his own time and since, was C. F. Schwartz, who arrived in 1750 and served continuously until his death in 1798, a man who won universal respect through

sheer force of character. He was one of those large-hearted, shepherd-like men to whom others instinctively look up. For the first twelve years of his service he was at Tranquebar, occupied like all his colleagues with the systematic routine of teaching, preaching, catechizing and supervision, and occasional evangelistic and pastoral journeys to distant places. One such place was Trichinopoly, where he found a promising field of work not only among the Hindus, among whom he made some converts, but also among the British troops of the garrison. He was instrumental in founding an orphanage for some of their children after an explosion in the powder magazine, and (in 1766) in building a church. Thus his visit, which had begun in 1762, lengthened out; and the upshot was that the S.P.C.K. agreed to support a mission there and that Schwartz was asked to stay on as the missionary. With the consent of his colleagues at Tranquebar he agreed, and thus another 'English mission' with a German Lutheran doing the work began (1767). Soon afterwards the English Governor of Madras appointed him chaplain to the troops. Schwartz used the whole of the first year's salary that this brought him for mission buildings, and afterwards too he used half for mission expenses and kept only half for himself, and even of this he gave much away in charity. He continued in Trichinopoly till 1778, dividing his time between the troops and the mission work, which with the assistance of several Indian catechists was steadily growing. With them he also made preaching tours in the country round about. He also learnt Arabic and Persian, in order to be able to converse with the Mohammedan Nawab of Arcot, who sometimes resided at Trichinopoly, and the officials of his court.

From time to time on his tours Schwartz visited Tanjore, where, as we have already seen, there was a congregation. Here he made the acquaintance of the Rajah, Tuljaji, a Maratha. A friendship grew up between them, and the Rajah wanted him to move to Tanjore. For some years this was not practicable; but in 1778, another missionary having been appointed to Trichinopoly, he made the move, and for the next twenty years Tanjore was his headquarters. Here he found himself drawn into public life. In 1779 the English in Madras, knowing that Hyder Ali had allied himself with the French and was meditating war, wished to send an embassy to him, and Hyder,—so it was reported—,had said, 'Let them send me the Christian; he will not deceive me'. Schwartz therefore (for it was Schwartz whom

he meant) was asked to go, and after some hesitation did go, in the cause of peace. At Seringapatam he had several interviews with Hyder Ali, and during the weeks while he was kept waiting, he was allowed to take services for Europeans and Indian Christians in Hyder's army, and to talk freely about Christianity with anyone who came to see him in his tent pitched on the glacis of the fort. The embassy however was fruitless. Having delivered Hyder's letter in Madras and returned to Tanjore, he proceeded to buy in and store as much rice as he could, foreseeing war and scarcity. There was just time for him to finish building the garrison church and another church for the Indian congregation, before the war began (1780). The next four years were a time of fear and distress in the country between Mysore and the Coromandel coast. There were several occasions when the fort of Tanjore, its population swollen by refugees, was facing a food crisis and the country people were refusing to bring in supplies, because they had no confidence in the fair dealing of the Rajah's officials. Schwartz was called in, and on his word bullocks were brought and grain was fetched from the villages and every man received fair payment. Even when Hyder Ali's troops were in the country, he was able to travel about freely, because Hyder had issued an order to his men 'to permit the venerable Padre to move everywhere unmolested, and to show him respect and kindness; saying that he was a holy man and meant no harm to his government.'[1]

Again in the internal administration of Tanjore he came to be very closely concerned. When the misgovernment of the Rajah's officials reached such a pitch that the inhabitants were fleeing the country by the thousand, and the British authorities stepped in and appointed a committee to take over the administration for the time being to put things right, the Resident insisted that Schwartz, than whom no one knew the people and the situation better, should be a member of it. He took his seat, and by his wise advice and the confidence he commanded outside played a large part in bringing the affairs of the State back to normal. The Rajah shortly before his death wished to make him guardian of Serfojee, the young boy whom he had adopted, having no son of his own. Schwartz, knowing that there were other claimants to the throne, thought it better that the Rajah's brother, Amir Singh, should be the boy's guardian and be regent on his behalf

[1] Hough, III p. 578.

until he grew up. This was done; but once again the administration got into the hands of corrupt officials, and the Government of Madras had to interfere. It fell to Schwartz, who had warned them what was going on, to draw up rules for the administration of justice and revenue, and to carry them out. He became the administrator of the State. Moreover, finding that Amir Singh was keeping the boy Serfojee a close prisoner, Schwartz rescued him and actually became his effective guardian. The boy became greatly attached to him, and later, when he had succeeded to the throne and Schwartz was dead, recorded his gratitude in an inscription which may still be seen on the tomb in Tanjore.

In the midst of his official duties Schwartz did not forget that he was a minister of the Gospel and a pastor. Those who came to see him of a morning on some secular business would find him conducting morning prayers or instructing candidates for Baptism, and would be invited to sit down and spend an hour listening to his teaching. As he grew old and his travelling was restricted, he was to be seen in the evening sitting under a shady tree listening to his catechists, as they read over to him their diaries. Moreover, as he was unmarried and always lived a frugal life, he was able to use most of the allowances he received from Government for the work of the mission; indeed he himself supported a great deal of it personally, and at his death left a fund of between £8000 and £9000 for the endowment of the work in Tanjore and the south.

Early in his Tanjore period (1778) he made a tour to the far south, where at Palamcottah in Tinnevelly District he found in the garrison a group of Indian Christian soldiers from Trichinopoly and Tanjore. He found also a Maratha Brahmin widow, who had applied to him before for Baptism, but he had felt obliged to refuse her, because she was living with an English officer. The officer being now dead, he baptized her, with the name Clorinda. This lady afterwards became a very zealous member of the church at Palamcottah. It was through her efforts that the first church was built there. It was she also who came to Tanjore in 1784 and urged him to appoint someone to look after the congregation. He paid a second visit to Palamcottah in 1785 and left there the catechist Sattianaden. In 1790 Sattianaden was ordained by Lutheran rite at Tranquebar, and thereafter he continued in charge of the growing work in Tinnevelly District, sometimes alone, sometimes with Jaenicke or another of the missionaries of the Tranquebar Mission. Schwartz

had a very high opinion of Sattianaden as a humble, disinterested man, a good preacher, skilled in dealing with his fellow-countrymen, generous to the poor out of a meagre stipend, and (according to the apostolic counsel) 'one that ruleth well his own house'. 'I may say with truth', he wrote, 'I never met with his equal among the Natives of this country.'[1] Such was the beginning of the Church of Tinnevelly.

Schwartz died at Tanjore on the 13th of February 1798. With him and his generation the Tranquebar Mission reached its zenith. Though the Danish portion of it was comparatively small, being confined to the actual territory of Tranquebar, the Lutheran missionaries had spread to all the European stations of Tamilnad, and in many of these a vigorous work had been started. Though some of these stations were designated 'English mission', there was little difference, except that the Book of Common Prayer was used in some places where there was an English congregation. Otherwise the same methodical pattern of German Pietism appeared everywhere: orphanages and charity schools, preaching and catechizing; patient Indian catechists going from village to village and from house to house, meeting regularly to receive their instructions and make their reports, very much under control; a few Indian ministers, well tested and approved, but decidedly subordinate; over all the missionary. It was a patriarchal state of affairs.

> Each congregation was independent and ruled by its own missionary, although the missionaries would occasionally meet, as it were, in Synod, and were in the habit of accepting guidance of any more prominent men, as, for example, of Schwartz, whom his brother-missionaries always regarded as their spiritual father and created into a quasi-bishop. Each missionary in local affairs was assisted by his catechists, who, under his presidency, formed a sort of disciplinary council, the decisions of which in various matters brought before them were usually confirmed by the civil power. The missionary was in fact regarded as the head of a community, on the same principle as native headmen were recognized, and was permitted to fine, flog, and otherwise punish offenders belonging to his community.[2]

Such was the pattern set for Protestant missions.

[1] Hough, III p. 665.
[2] A. Westcott: *Our Oldest Mission*, quoted by Richter, pp. 126 f.

Chapter IX

THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

By the end of the eighteenth century it was abundantly clear that the next period in the history of India was to be the British period. At the turn of the century British rule was firmly established in the three 'Presidencies' of Bengal, Madras and Bombay; in the next fifty years it was to be extended over large areas of the northern, central and north-western parts of the country. Throughout the whole area states, great or small, ruled by Indian princes remained as relics of former times, but in each of them there was a British 'Resident' to represent the 'Paramount Power'. In 1800 British rule was still the rule of the East India Company, a commercial organization which had become a government, yet remained a company incorporated under a charter granted by the British Parliament and renewable every twenty years.

It was about the turn of the century also that what is called the modern missionary movement began in England, the U.S.A. and other countries of the West. In England this was one of the fruits of the Evangelical Revival, both within and without the Church of England,—the English counterpart of the Pietist movement in Germany, which, as we have seen, had already produced the first Protestant missionaries. The old societies, the S.P.C.K. and S.P.G., had been in existence for a century past, and we have already noticed the part played by the former in the eighteenth century missions in India. But now, in the last decade of the eighteenth century and the first two decades of the nineteenth, under a fresh impulse of missionary zeal a number of other societies were founded, such as: the Baptist Missionary Society in 1792, the London Missionary Society in 1795 (at first undenominational, later mainly Congregationalist), the Church Missionary Society in 1799 (Evangelical Anglican), and the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society in 1813. In America the first society, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (Congregationalist) was founded in 1810. The idea spread to all the principal denominations of Protestantism, and in each one of them an organization was formed for mission work in non-Christian lands. Thus, just at the time when the British power in India was being consolidated the

newly formed missionary societies were eager to begin work. It is true to say that in this country Protestant Missions followed the flag,—the Danish flag at Tranquebar, the British flag at the stations of the 'English missions' of the eighteenth century and in the great missionary expansion of the nineteenth century. But before that great expansion could begin, there was an obstacle to remove, the new policy of the East India Company.

In South India the Company had treated the German missionaries with sympathy. Many of them had been given free passages to India in the Company's ships. Ziegenbalg had found the English authorities at Madras much more co-operative than the Danish authorities at Tranquebar. In Schwartz they had had the utmost confidence. In Bengal too, when the Swedish missionary Kiernander migrated from Cuddalore to Calcutta in 1758, the authorities had not objected to his settling and working there. But along with friends and well-wishers there had also been critics of the missionaries and of the Indian Christians; and towards the end of the century the prevailing opinion hardened against them. This appeared most clearly in the parliamentary debates in London in 1793 on the renewal of the Company's charter. Proposals by the evangelical social reformer Wilberforce, that the Company should accept responsibility for promoting the spiritual welfare of its Indian subjects, and that schoolmasters and chaplains should be sent out to work among them, provoked vigorous opposition from the Directors and their supporters in Parliament. To countenance a few missions in India was one thing; to be forced to make provision for mission work wholesale was quite another. It was argued that an attempt to interfere with the beliefs of the people of India would create disaffection and endanger British rule. In the heat of the debate the goodwill hitherto shown by the Company evaporated, and the upshot was not only that Wilberforce's proposals were rejected, but that the Company both in England and India began to oppose the entry of missionaries. This policy was pursued for the next twenty years. Since in any case Europeans were not allowed to reside in the Company's territories without its permission, the Company could easily enforce it.

Nevertheless the idea that, if England was to rule India, something should be done for the spiritual welfare of the Indian people gained strength in the British public; and there were those in the East India Company itself who shared it. Notable among these were Charles Grant, a member of the Council of Bengal

and afterwards a director of the Company, a small group of civilians in Bengal and certain of the Company's chaplains in India, especially David Brown, Claudius Buchanan, Daniel Corrie (afterwards the first Bishop of Madras), Henry Martyn and Thomas Thomason. Through these men of strong evangelical convictions not only was a conscientious ministry to the Europeans carried on in India, but also the idea of a mission to the people of India was sedulously fostered. Consequently at the next renewal of the charter the Company had to make some concessions.

Meanwhile a very remarkable man had arrived in Bengal: William Carey. A self-educated country pastor, who had eked out a meagre stipend by teaching a village school and working as a cobbler, Carey had been the leading spirit in the formation of the Baptist Missionary Society. It was his constant urging of the idea on his fellow-ministers, and especially his sermon on Isaiah LIV 2-3, with its famous two points, 'Expect great things from God, attempt great things for God', which had moved a small group of them to found the Society; and he himself became one of its two first missionaries. The other was a zealous but erratic doctor, called John Thomas, who had been in India already and had done some evangelistic work under Charles Grant's patronage in Bengal. It was through his persuasion that the Society chose Bengal as its first field. Despairing of getting permission from the East India Company to go to India as missionaries, and disappointed of a passage in an English ship without it, they sailed in a Danish vessel. With Carey went his wife and four children and his wife's sister. When the ship entered the Hooghly river, they got into a country boat and landed inconspicuously at Calcutta in November 1793.

The plan was that the missionaries should as soon as possible earn their own living. Goods had been provided, whose sale was intended to finance them for the first year; but, thanks to Thomas's imprudent management, the money was all spent in two months, before any other arrangement had been made. Carey found himself and his family in a desperate plight; his wife and eldest son were down with dysentery; they had to be dependent on the charity of a kindly Hindu for a dilapidated house in which to live while he sought for a livelihood. In February, having obtained a lease of some waste land in the Sundarbans, south-east of Calcutta, he removed there and set to work clearing the jungle for cultivation. But meanwhile Thomas had renewed an old acquaintance with George Udny, the Company's Commercial

Resident at Malda in North Bengal, and Udny came to the rescue by offering them both posts as managers of two new indigo 'factories' in his district. They were glad to accept, and it was in this capacity that Carey settled at Madnabati in Malda District in June 1794. Though a livelihood was now assured, misfortunes were not over. In the first year at Madnabati sickness again visited the family. One of the children died. Mrs Carey, overwhelmed by all these troubles in a strange land, to which she had been persuaded much against her will to come, became mentally deranged.

At Madnabati they stayed five and a half years. During that time, besides attending to his indigo business, Carey learnt Bengali and Sanskrit, preached to the people of the surrounding district and opened a school. With a pandit and some assistance from Thomas he translated the New Testament and a large part of the Old into Bengali. Through Udny, who was in sympathy with these Christian activities, he obtained a printing press for the future use of the mission. When the factory was given up after disastrous floods, he bought another one out of his savings and planned there a mission community living a common life after the manner of the Moravian Brethren, when the B.M.S. should send out more missionaries.

In 1799 four families arrived in the Hooghly in an American ship. As they had no permission from the Company, they had been advised to go straight to the Danish settlement of Serampore, about fifteen miles upstream from Calcutta. This they did, and the Danish Governor, who had served in Tranquebar and known Schwartz, made them welcome and defended them against the attempts of the British authorities to have them expelled. After some parleying they were left in peace; but it was made clear to them that they would not be allowed to join Carey up country. This news having been brought to him, he decided that he would come and join them. Accordingly he sold his factory and removed to Serampore early in 1800. Thomas also came there a little later.

Thus began the Serampore Mission. A large house and compound near the river were bought, and here the community which Carey had planned took shape and, as the years passed, developed an astonishing range of activities. Death soon thinned the ranks of the newcomers; but two men, Joshua Marshman a schoolmaster, and William Ward, a printer, survived to form with Carey a famous partnership.

Their first object was to get the Bengali New Testament printed. Carey's press was set up and entrusted to Ward. Since it was an accepted principle that the mission should be self-supporting, Marshman and his wife started boarding schools for Anglo-Indian boys and girls, children of fee-paying parents. These schools quickly became popular and brought in income. The press too was able to earn money by accepting orders from outside. Besides being occupied in these pursuits the missionaries preached, argued and distributed leaflets in Serampore and the villages round about. Five and a half years of evangelistic work in Madnabati had yielded no converts; but at Serampore there was one in the very first year, when Krishna Pal was baptized in the Hooghly in the presence of the Governor and a large gathering in December 1800. He was a carpenter, who had become friendly with the missionaries after having a dislocated arm treated by Thomas. Soon afterwards his wife and sister-in-law and a neighbouring family also were baptized. To this little group other converts from different castes were added one by one, some from Serampore, others from other places. From the first there was a clear repudiation of caste observance. Krishna Pal and his neighbour ate with the mission community even before their baptism (and were assaulted for it in the street on their way home). The Brahmin Krishna Prasad at his first Communion received the cup after the Sudra Krishna Pal had drunk from it, and when he was married, his bride was Krishna Pal's daughter.

The printing of the Bengali New Testament was finished early in 1801. Its publication led to an unexpected result: Carey was offered the post of professor of Bengali in the College of Fort William, which Lord Wellesley, the Governor-General, founded in that year for the training of the East India Company's junior officials.[1] After consulting his colleagues he accepted it. Thenceforward he divided his time between Serampore and Calcutta. The post brought in a handsome salary, which became still more handsome when he was made professor of Sanskrit and Marathi as well as Bengali. He loyally paid the money

[1] Another missionary on the staff of the College of Fort William was C. W. Paezold, a German who had worked in the 'English mission' at Madras. He was professor of Tamil until 1804, when the college was drastically reduced by order of the Directors, who disapproved of Wellesley's scheme. Carey served in it throughout its whole life as a teaching body, until 1830.

into the common fund, as all the members of the mission had pledged themselves to do with their earnings. In this way they not only became self-supporting, but built up a considerable fund for the mission.

This new appointment opened up wide prospects. Since the college in its early years served all three Presidencies, most of the major languages of India were taught in it, and for this reason pandits from those language areas were attracted to Calcutta. At one time there were fifty pandits working in the college, twelve of them in Carey's own department.[1] With all this linguistic talent about him he saw a wonderful opportunity of multiplying translations of the Bible into Indian languages. Not only so; since Calcutta was a port and a capital city having connexions with other countries of South-east Asia, it seemed possible to extend the work into non-Indian languages too.

> We have it in our power (he wrote near the end of 1803) if our means would do for it, in the space of fifteen years to have the Word of God translated and printed in all the languages of the East. Our situation is such as to furnish us with the best assistance from Natives of the different countries. We can have types of all the different characters cast here; and about seven hundred rupees, part of which I hope we shall be able to furnish, would complete the work.[2]

Claudius Buchanan was of the same opinion and Lord Wellesley himself patronized the project. A prospectus drawn up by Buchanan and signed by him and by the Serampore missionaries, outlining a scheme for translating the Bible into fifteen Oriental languages, was presented to the Governor-general and circulated to the Directors, the Bishops, the universities and other influential bodies in England. Large subscriptions were received in answer to it.

To this grandiose scheme Carey and his colleagues in all seriousness set their hands. The mission compound at Serampore became the home of what may almost be called a translation industry. Ward, writing to a cousin in 1811, thus described the scene:

> As you enter, you see your cousin, in a small room, dressed in a white jacket, reading or writing, and looking over the office, which is more than 170 feet long. There you find

[1] S. Pearce Carey: *William Carey*, p. 242.
[2] Hough, IV, p. 131.

> Indians translating the Scriptures into the different tongues, or correcting proof-sheets. You observe, laid out in cases, types in Arabic, Persian, Nagari, Telugu, Panjabi, Marathi, Chinese, Oriya, Burmese, Kanarese, Greek, Hebrew and English. Hindus, Mussulmans and Christian Indians are busy—composing, correcting, distributing. Next are four men throwing off the Scripture sheets in the different languages; others folding the sheets and delivering them to the large store-room; and six Mussulmans do the binding. Beyond the office are the varied type-casters, besides a group of men making ink; and in a spacious open walled-round place, our paper-mill, for we manufacture our own paper'.[1]

Some of the translations were made by the missionaries with the help of pandits. Carey himself was responsible in this way for those in Bengali, Hindi, Sanskrit and Marathi. Others were made by pandits working from one of the Indian versions under his supervision; others by foreigners associated with the missionaries; others were made by a chaplain or officer elsewhere and came to Serampore to be printed. By 1834, when Carey died, six versions of the whole Bible had been published, twenty-three of the New Testament only, and smaller portions had appeared in ten other languages. The languages, besides major and minor ones spoken in India, included Burmese, Javan, Malayan and Chinese.[2] It must be admitted that many of the versions thus made were very imperfect. Some had to be replaced quite soon, and even the best had to undergo drastic revision. Carey himself was aware that they were imperfect. During his lifetime he revised his Bengali version again and again: the Old Testament three times and the New Testament eight. The wonder is not that the versions were unsatisfactory, but that they were ever made.

Carey, Marshman and Ward also planned to make Serampore a base for missions in India and beyond, sending out for the purpose new missionaries arriving from the West, their own sons

[1] S. Pearce Carey, *op. cit.*, p. 283.

[2] Richter, p. 140. The Chinese version was prepared by an Armenian Christian called Lassar, who had lived in China and afterwards come to Calcutta, where Buchanan engaged him to make this translation and sent him to Serampore. With him were associated Marshman, and two of the missionaries' sons, John Marshman and Jabez Carey, whom Lassar coached in Chinese. Hough IV, pp. 84 f. For other details of the translations see S. Pearce Carey, *op. cit.*, chapter XXXII.

and Indian and Anglo-Indian members of their community. Carey from his second year in Calcutta started mission preaching in one of the poorer areas of the city, Lall Bazaar. With or without Danish passports preaching tours were made in Central Bengal. During Lord Wellesley's Governor-generalship it was possible for new missionaries to be received in 1803 and 1805. Through these and Anglo-Inidan and Indian evangelists work was extended to Dinajpur, Malda and Katwa. Six of the Indian Christians were working as evangelists in 1805. As early as 1803 Carey and his colleagues were planning a number of subordinate mission stations, in each of which there should be a missionary with one or two Indian helpers, dividing his time between some worldly business, by which he earned his living, and preaching, distributing Bibles and pamphlets, and running schools.[1] But most of this kind of development had to await the revision of the East India Company's charter in 1813. Under Lord Wellesley's immediate successors, under the influence of the scare caused by the Vellore Mutiny of 1806, the official attitude to missions became more hostile. Preaching in Calcutta was forbidden, and new missionaries arriving were sent away again. After 1813, however, missions under the aegis of Serampore were sent as far afield as Nagpur, Delhi and Ajmer in India, and Amboyna in Indonesia. By the time of Carey's death there were eighteen of them. Carey, Marshman and Ward were the planners and directors of all such activity, as of the affairs of the Serampore Mission generally.

This fact became a cause of friction between the Trio in India and the B.M.S. committee in England. They had made themselves self-supporting and independent, and in India it was they who made appointments, acquired property and directed affairs. It was they also who financed most of the work with money earned or otherwise raised by themselves. They personally had provided for it far more money than the B.M.S. had. The early B.M.S. committee had trusted them and given them a free hand; but after the death of the original members, Carey's fellow-workers in the foundation of the Society, new men came into office who began to object to the proceedings of the famous three and wished to assert authority over them. In this they took the side of a group of young missionaries, who found them dictatorial. The three refused to surrender their

[1] Carey's letter of 14th December 1803, quoted in George Smith: *The Life of William Carey*, pp. 118 f. (Everyman edition).

freedom. The difference of opinion resulted first in the junior missionaries' separating themselves from the Serampore men in 1816 and then in a long and unhappy controversy with the home committee, during which the Serampore men practically carried on their work as an independent mission. In 1827 Marshman visited England and attempted to establish personal relations with the committee and remove misunderstandings. The attempt failed, and from then on the separation between the Serampore men and the B.M.S. was complete.

It was during this controversy that they planned and carried into execution the project which is their permanent memorial, Serampore College. Like the Tranquebar missionaries in the south, they had already built up a system of elementary schools; there were 126 of these in 1818. Now they planned something more: a 'college for the instruction of Asiatic, Christian and other youth in Eastern Literature and European Science'. Their aim was to produce a class of enlightened men conversant with both the classical literature of India and the best western learning of the day, and in particular to raise up educated men to serve and lead the Indian Church as ministers and teachers and in other walks of life. What they proposed was an arts and science college with a theological department. It was to be a place where Christian and non-Christian students rubbed shoulders together. From their own resources they bought the land and built the buildings; for other expenses they raised money in India, England, Denmark and America. The building was begun in 1818; classes opened in 1819 with 37 students (19 resident Christians and 18 non-resident non-Christians). Included in the curriculum were Sanskrit, Arabic, Bengali, English, Natural Science and Medicine; and in the early years of the college most of these subjects were taught in Bengali. When, in 1827, the King of Denmark granted the college a charter empowering it to confer degrees, here was a Christian university in embryo.[1]

[1] The later history of Serampore College may be briefly summarized here. It was carried on independently by the professors, one of whom was Marshman's son, until 1846, when it and the whole mission were handed over to the B.M.S. At the transfer of Serampore to the British in 1845 its status was left unchanged. The B.M.S. maintained it till 1883; but from then until 1910 the college was in abeyance, though a B.M.S. Seminary for Bengal was carried on in the buildings. From 1910 its college status was revived, and a reorganization took place, whereby the Arts and Science departments were affiliated to Calcutta University, but the Theological department was left free to exercise its

In the same year in which the college was founded (1818) the indefatigable three entered the field of journalism, when Marshman and his son started a weekly newspaper in Bengali, called *Samachar Darpan*, believed to be the first newspaper ever printed in any Oriental language, and an English monthly, *The Friend of India*.[1] Both were to play a valuable part in educating public opinion on social questions. Ever since 1801, when Lord Wellesley deputed him to inquire into the sacrifice of children to the Ganges at Sagar Island, Carey had been an active promoter of humanitarian reforms. On the basis of his report that practice had been prohibited. Other evils remained, of which the most notorious was *satisahagamana*, the burning alive of Hindu widows on the funeral pyres of their husbands. Since the day when he first saw this ghastly rite carried out, he never ceased to protest against it. The first number of *The Friend of India* carried an article on widow-burning, which was described as 'a powerful and convincing statement of the real facts and circumstances of the case', and the paper continued to keep the matter before the public by reporting actual cases as they occurred. Both in India and in England protests gathered strength. Strong-minded officials, among them some of Carey's former pupils, prohibited the practice in their districts on their own responsibility; but the highest authorities long hesitated to take action, fearing the political effects of offending orthodox opinion. By and by the voices of Ram Mohan Roy and a few enlightened Hindus were also raised against it. At length in 1829 Lord William Bentinck issued his famous order prohibiting 'suttee' in the Company's territories. At that time Carey held the post of Bengali translator to Government. The story has often been told how the order was delivered to him on a Sunday morning, as he was preparing for church, and how he hastily arranged for someone else to take the service, sent for his pandit and set to work at once to translate the document, lest any delay on his part should cause lives to be lost which might have been saved.

rights and powers as a university under the old charter. Provision was also made for other theological colleges and seminaries in India to become affiliated to it. In 1918 the Governing Body was enlarged, and a Senate representative of various Christian Communions in India was set up to administer the Theological department. The affiliation of the Arts and Science departments was transferred to the University of Burdwan in 1960.

[1] *The Friend of India* is continued still through *The Statesman* of Calcutta.

Ward's death from cholera in 1823 made the first breach in the Serampore partnership. Carey died in 1834; Marshman in 1837. Long before then the three men had become established public figures. In India many of the ruling officials were Carey's old students, and both in India and abroad his learning in Sanskrit and other Oriental languages and his eminence in Botany[1] won him respect even among those who had no love for Christian missions. Among Christians he and his friends held a unique place as pioneers and planners on a grand scale of Protestant missions. They lived through the period of the Company's greatest hostility to missions, and by their own works did much to dispel the prejudice against them, and to prepare the way for those who were to follow. The width of their interests, the vigour and industry and generosity with which they tackled everything they undertook, and the statesmanlike quality of their plans are truly astonishing. All that they expected and attempted was great.

It was in the early years of the Serampore Mission, and while the official policy of the East India Company was still opposed to the entry of missionaries, that another Protestant mission began in the southernmost corner of India in what was then Travancore State (now it is the Kanyakumari District of Madras State), which made rapid progress and produced a large Christian community. Here the pioneer was W. T. Ringeltaube, a German Lutheran with leanings towards the Moravian type of Pietism, who had already spent a few months in 1797-98 in Calcutta under the S.P.C.K., but had become discouraged and had returned to Europe. In 1804 he came out to India a second time under the London Missionary Society, travelling with two other L.M.S. missionaries in a Danish ship that brought them to Tranquebar. His two companions went to Madras, and were able to get the Governor's permission to settle at Vizagapatam. Ringeltaube after a stay at Tranquebar turned south, partly at the instance of J. C. Kohlhoff, Schwartz's successor at Tanjore, who wanted him to look after the Christians in Tinnevelly District, then without a missionary, and partly because of hopes aroused by a recent convert from Travancore, called Vedamanikam, who told him that there were two hundred people awaiting Baptism in his native village of Mayiladi, near Cape Comorin.

[1] He had a life-long interest in Botany, kept his own botanical garden at Serampore, and was the founder of the Agricultural and Horticultural Society of Bengal.

Vedamanikam was a remarkable man. Though an Adi Dravida, of the caste called Sāmbavar, he was able to read even in his pre-Christian days and owned land; moreover he was a deeply religious man with a devotion to the Hindu gods which led him to make a long pilgrimage with his nephew to Chidambaram, one of the great Saivite shrines of South India. Not having found there the experience which he sought, he dreamed that a venerable old man rebuked him for having come on a fruitless errand, and advised him to go back home again. On the homeward journey the two pilgrims stopped at Tanjore with relatives who were Christians, and these spoke to them of Christianity, took them to church and introduced them to Kohlhoff. After the disappointment at Chidambaram they were ready to welcome Christian teaching, and shortly afterwards they were baptized. Returning to Mayiladi after a few more weeks spent at Tanjore, Vedamanikam proceeded to give Christian teaching to his relatives there, a group of whom gave up idolatry and assumed Christian names, and in consequence incurred a certain amount of persecution. On a later visit to Tanjore, hearing from Kohlhoff of a missionary newly arrived and looking for a station, he went to see Ringeltaube and begged him to come to Travancore.

Leaving Tranquebar in 1806 Ringeltaube proceeded to Palamcottah, which became his headquarters for the next three years. From there he travelled about among the Christian communities of Tinnevelly and also visited Mayiladi, where, although Vedamanikam's figure of two hundred turned out to be an exaggeration, some twenty people were baptized later in the year. From 1809, when his temporary responsibilities on the Tinnevelly side were brought to an end, he moved into Travancore, permission having been obtained through the British Resident for him to live there and build chapels and schools. Vedamanikam became his chief catechist, and up till then the Christians were of Vedamanikam's caste; but from 1810 members of the caste now called Nādārs began to ask for Baptism. Though he refused them at first, not being satisfied with their motives, he baptized four hundred of them during the following year, and from then onwards it was people of this caste who formed the bulk of the Christian community in South Travancore, as in Tinnevelly. Chapels were built in six or seven places; schools were started; and Ringeltaube gathered a few youths whom he trained to be catechists. He lived in extreme simplicity

in a little thatched house, a lonely eccentric, quick-tempered but generous, giving away most of his small stipend and often lacking sufficient food and clothing for himself, touring, preaching, teaching, administering the Sacraments, collecting and distributing relief funds in famine time, and dealing out paternal discipline to a flock about whose quality he had few illusions.

> I have now about 600 Christians (he wrote in 1813). . . . Three or four may have a longing for their salvation. The rest have come from all sorts of motives, which we can only know after years have passed.[1]

The depression to which these words and others that could be quoted bear witness was aggravated by failing health, until in 1815, feeling unfit to continue any longer, he rendered the account of his mission to the L.M.S., resigned and left India, having empowered Vedamanikam to administer the mission until a successor should arrive.

In spite of his unfavourable comments he claimed in his letter of resignation that his work had been built on sound foundations. Certainly it did not pass away. After the arrival of his successor, Charles Mead, in 1817 a great mass movement of Nādārs into Christianity began, which continued throughout the nineteenth century and has issued in the numerous community that now forms the Kanyakumari diocese of the Church of South India.

Meanwhile (1813) the time for another renewal of the East India Company's charter drew near. Though the Company's policy since 1793 had been opposed to the entry of new missionaries,[2] it had not entirely prevented some from establishing themselves. Nor was this solely due to their being in such places as Serampore under the administration of another European Power, advantageous as this was. Ringeltaube was not hindered by the English authorities; the other L.M.S. missionaries who came out with him were allowed to settle at Vizagapatam; another, John Hands, was allowed to go to Bellary in 1810; and even in Bengal, where the difficulty was greatest, a friendly chaplain could sometimes persuade the Governor-general to cancel an order of deportation. The policy was not always carried out with full

[1] From a letter to his sister quoted in W. Robinson: *Ringeltaube the Rishi*, p. 111.

[2] No attempt was made to interfere with the old-established missions in South India.

rigour. Yet the fact was that the Company claimed a power of veto, and that any missionary who was allowed to work in its territories was there on sufferance. Therefore Wilberforce and Claudius Buchanan and others conducted a strenuous campaign in England to get missionary work allowed by law.

This time they were successful. The charter of 1813 contained the provision that 'sufficient facilities should be afforded by law, to persons desirous of going to, and remaining in, India, for the purpose of accomplishing those benevolent designs', i.e. the introduction among the inhabitants of India of 'useful knowledge and religious and moral improvement'.[1] This meant that in future missionaries were to be allowed to live and work in British India unhindered, provided that they respected the authority of the local government and that the principle of religious freedom for all were maintained. It is therefore from 1813 that the great expansion of Protestant Missions in India dates.

The charter legislation of this year marks the beginning of the end of the East India Company as a trading corporation. It lost its trading monopoly in India and became more obviously an organization governing the country under the remote control of the British Parliament, which was not yet ready to take full responsibility. One sign of the change of emphasis from commerce to government may be seen in the provision of an annual sum of a lakh of rupees to be set aside from the Indian revenues for education,—not specifically for Christian education; those who were responsible for this clause had in mind the revival of the old learning of India and the teaching of western science. This grant was the forerunner of the modern system of government grants to educational institutions.

Another important feature of the charter of 1813 was the setting up of an ecclesiastical establishment, consisting of a Bishop of Calcutta and an archdeacon for each of the three Presidency towns, Calcutta, Madras and Bombay, to be maintained from Indian revenues. It was thus that the Anglican episcopate was introduced into India. The primary purpose of this was to provide for the spiritual oversight of the chaplains and the English churches, civil and military; it was not intended as a contribution to missionary policy, though it was bound to affect those missionaries and Indian Christians who were connected with the Church of England. From an Indian point of view it

[1] Hough, IV, pp. 193 f.

was a disadvantage that the bishops were men who had had no experience of Indian Christianity; it was still many years before any bishop was appointed who had worked among Indian congregations and was chiefly concerned with the Indian Church. And the relations between the bishops of the ecclesiastical establishment and the missionary societies were still to be worked out. Still a beginning had been made, and for the first time Anglican clergy and people in India had a complete church order in the country. The meagre provision of one bishop for all India was increased in 1833 by the establishment of bishoprics for Madras and Bombay.

Once the Company's veto was removed, the way was open for Protestant missions. Of the newly formed societies those which had already begun work in India were able to extend their activities, and those which had not yet entered the Indian field were able to enter. To the former class belonged the B.M.S., overshadowed for the time being by the independent Serampore Mission, and the L.M.S.; to the latter the C.M.S., the W.M.M.S. the Church of Scotland and afterwards many others. Between the two may be reckoned the American Board, two of whose missionaries, survivors of eight who were refused permission to enter Bengal in 1812, were after some adventures allowed to settle at Bombay in 1813.[1] The C.M.S., which had already been in correspondence with the evangelical chaplains, entrusted its Indian work to 'Corresponding Committees' voluntarily formed by the chaplains and their friends in the three Presidency towns. The Calcutta committee was formed in 1812, that of Madras in 1814 and that of Bombay in 1818. Many of the early missionaries sent by the C.M.S. were Germans trained at the missionary college of Basel, such as J. J. Weitbrecht of Burdwan and C. T. E. Rhenius of Tinnevelly. Both in these committees and apart from them the C.M.S. (and other missions too) were often helped by pious army officers and civilians, a type which tended to appear more frequently among the British in India as the nineteenth century advanced. Men of this kind also supported the auxiliary Bible Societies and Tract and Book Societies that were formed in the principal cities. The missionaries usually resided at the cantonment stations, where English services, pastoral work among civilians, soldiers and camp followers, orphanages,

[1] Others of the party went eventually to Burma, where one of them, Adoniram Judson, became famous. He and others became Baptists during their short stay in Calcutta.

schools, itinerant preaching and the distribution of tracts and portions of the Scriptures (sometimes written or translated by themselves) formed the staple of their work. As a community came into being, services in one or more Indian languages would be added; some of the converts would be chosen to work as catechists; here and there one of them would be ordained.

Missions from the continent of Europe (other than the old Tranquebar Mission) and most of those from the U.S.A. came after 1833, when another revision of the charter removed restrictions which had hitherto operated against non-British societies. The first of the continental societies was the Basel Mission, which began its work in South Kanara on the west coast in 1834. Other continental missions which came in the first half of the nineteenth century were Gossner's Evangelical Lutheran Mission (Bihar, 1839) and the Leipzig Lutheran Mission (Tranquebar and Tamilnad, 1841). Of American missions the first was the American Board. After gaining a footing in Bombay in 1813, as has just been said, it extended its Marathi Mission to Ahmednagar in 1831, and began its Madura Mission in South India in 1834. Other missions from the U.S.A. which began to work in India in the first half of the century were those of the American Presbyterians (Punjab, 1834; U.P. 1836), the American Baptists (Nellore, Andhra Pradesh, 1835; Assam, 1841) and the American Lutherans (Northern Circars, Andhra Pradesh, 1842).

The growth of Anglican organization and influence in India after 1813 affected the old 'English missions' in the South. These, as we have seen, were under the patronage of the S.P.C.K., but staffed by Lutheran missionaries recruited from Halle and connected with the Danish mission of Tranquebar. By the turn of the century the zeal which had started this enterprise in Denmark and Germany had grown cold; moreover the continent of Europe was in the throes of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. Consequently few new missionaries were forthcoming to take the place of the surviving veterans of the eighteenth century. It thus happened that the rise of missionary zeal in England and the relaxation of restrictions in India came at a time when the old missions in South India were in difficulties. The result was to bring the 'English missions' more directly under Anglican control. Hitherto the S.P.C.K. had subsidized them, but had exercised little or no direct control over the work; neither had the Danish Board administered them; the missionaries had been a law unto themselves, and the property was held

by them personally, until in their old age the survivors bequeathed it to the S.P.C.K. But in 1816 the first Bishop of Calcutta, Thomas Middleton, included these missions in his visitation of South India, and in 1826 the S.P.C.K. handed them over to the S.P.G., a society which only then began to work in India. The consequence of these developments was that by degrees the regular Anglican church order was established in them, and Anglicanism replaced Lutheran Pietism. The Book of Common Prayer, already in use in some places, became the standard liturgy; Confirmation and Ordination were reserved to the Bishop. But the surviving German missionaries continued until their death, and thus the change came about gradually.

Meanwhile at Tranquebar itself the old Danish Mission directly under the control of the Mission Board in Copenhagen was reduced to a very feeble state. Negotiations were on foot in 1816 to hand it over to the Anglicans. If the decision had rested with the men on the spot, it would have been handed over; but the Board, though unable itself to carry on the work effectively, refused to agree. In 1820 the country stations connected with Tranquebar were handed over to the 'English mission' of Tanjore. Tranquebar remained; but after the death (in 1837) of Caemmerer, the last of the old series of missionaries, the mission there was practically defunct until 1846, when the Leipzig Mission began to revive it, after the Danish government had sold its Indian possessions to the British (1845).

The change of management in the 'English missions' proceeded gradually and in most respects caused no friction; but in one matter there was trouble. As we have seen, the old Lutheran missionaries, with few exceptions, had tolerated caste divisions among their people. The Anglicans objected to this. The fifth Bishop of Calcutta, Daniel Wilson, on his visitation of South India in 1833 was scandalized at the extent to which he found caste distinctions kept up among Christians. Not only were considerations of caste made paramount when catechists were appointed or godparents chosen, but Sudra and Adi Dravida Christians were seated separately in church, at Holy Communion the Adi Dravidas had to communicate after the others, they were not allowed into the houses of the Sudra Christians, and even in the cemeteries their dead were buried in a separate corner. The problem had already came to the fore in the time of Bishop Heber, to whom a congregation in Madras appealed against a young missionary who had caused children of Adi Dravida families

to sit with children of Sudra parents in church. Bishop Heber consulted the other missionaries then in South India, and, finding that the majority were not in favour of direct action against caste scruples, transferred the missionary to Tanjore. But Bishop Wilson took a different view. He issued a strongly worded pastoral letter ordering that 'the distinction of caste must be abandoned, decidedly, immediately and finally', which at once provoked a furore. Great indignation prevailed among the Sudra Christians of Madras, Tanjore and Trichinopoly; most of the catechists refused to carry out the Bishop's policy, even if they were dismissed for it. The discontent aroused by the new policy and still continuing was one reason why many members of the old congregations joined the Leipzig Mission after 1846, because it was willing to let the old caste distinctions be kept. The problem constantly exercised missionaries of all denominations throughout the nineteenth century.[1]

A different cause of friction arose in the most remote of the 'English missions', that of Tinnevelly, which had begun as an offshoot of Tanjore in the time of Schwartz. After the death (in 1800) of Jaenicke, the missionary who had worked with Sattianaden, neither Tanjore nor Trichinopoly could spare another missionary. Gericke, a senior missionary from Madras, made a tour there in 1802, during which he baptized the astonishing number of 1300 people; but they were left with very inadequate provision for pastoral care, and so they remained, apart from Ringeltaube's three years, until James Hough, the historian, became chaplain at Palamcottah in 1816, to find pastor Abraham struggling to minister to a community of 3100 scattered in 63 places.[2] During his stay (1816-1821) Hough did what he could for them, supplying Bibles and Prayer Books, teaching catechists and teachers and generally acting as superintendent, and he it was who persuaded the Corresponding Committee of the C.M.S. in Madras to start work in Tinnevelly. In 1820 they sent Schmid and C. T. E. Rhenius, a very gifted evangelist, in whose time a great mass movement began. These men and some others who followed were Lutherans working under the C.M.S., an arrangement for which, as we have seen, there were many precedents. Anomalous though it was, it worked for ten or a dozen years; but then a crisis arose when Rhenius, to cope with the growing work, proposed to the Society the ordination of six Indian cate-

[1] Richter, pp. 168 f. [2] Hough, IV, p. 251.

chists and an Anglo-Indian. He wanted them to be ordained by the Lutheran rite, as Sattianaden and others had been; but the C.M.S. committee pointed out that there was now an Anglican bishop in India, and that, this being so, an Anglican society could not agree to a non-episcopal ordination. Rhenius then declared that the candidates shared the scruples which he himself felt about certain points in the doctrine and ritual of the Church of England, and a long argument followed, which very nearly led to his resignation. At the last minute however he decided to withdraw his candidates and stay in the mission. But shortly afterwards he published a book review in which he criticized Anglican beliefs and practices so openly that the C.M.S. felt obliged to dissolve their connexion with him (1835),—an unhappy ending to a very fruitful ministry. The other Lutheran missionaries resigned in sympathy with Rhenius. The unhappy state of affairs was emphasized by his and their return after a short absence, to work independently in the area as the German Evangelical Mission, drawing away after them 67 of the congregations. Rhenius died however in 1838, and in the two years following the remaining German missionaries and their congregations returned to the C.M.S. Meanwhile the portion of the Tinnevelly mission for which the S.P.C.K. had been responsible had passed to the S.P.G.

By that time Tinnevelly and South Travancore were already the two parts of India where Protestant Christians were most numerous.

Chapter X

FURTHER HISTORY OF THE SYRIAN CHRISTIANS

There is little in the history of the Syrian Christians in the eighteenth century that need detain us in this book.[1] The two communities, Romo-Syrian and Jacobite, continued side by side, the Jacobite struggling to maintain itself in face of the superior power and organization of the Church of Rome. Yet there was also a good deal of connexion between them. In some places they shared the same church building, though their services were different, and at times they seemed disposed to make common cause. Several times there were negotiations with Rome designed to bring about the union of the two communities under an Indian bishop. If the Roman Church had followed Bishop Chandy[2] with a succession of Indian vicars apostolic, there might perhaps have been a union under Roman auspices; but they did not. On the other hand discontent with foreign control sometimes made the Romo-Syrians listen to proposals that they should unite with the other group under one or other of its bishops, if only the latter could secure Roman recognition; but, since Rome would never agree to anything of the kind, nothing came of this either.[3]

The Jacobites had a succession of bishops all entitled Mar Thoma, each of whom received his office from his predecessor; but, since there was doubt whether the original Mar Thoma had ever been validly consecrated, their standing was uncertain. From time to time foreign prelates visited India, some of whom were helpful but others troublesome, either because they formed parties or because their conduct became scandalous. Thus in 1708 a Mesopotamian bishop, Mar Gabriel, was sent to Malabar by the Nestorian Patriarch, and during a long stay in the country till his death in 1730 or 1731 collected to himself a following, which further divided the non-Roman Syrians. The most notable influx of foreign bishops was in 1751, when in response to requests from India three Jacobite bishops, Mar Baselios, Mar

[1] On this subject see L. W. Brown: *The Indian Christians of St Thomas*, chapter V.

[2] See above, p. 103.

[3] For the further history of the Romo-Syrians see below, pp. 221 ff.

Gregorios and Mar Ivanios, with some minor ecclesiastics, arrived in a Dutch ship. They were not welcomed by the ruling Metran, Mar Thoma V, and their early years in India were vexed by a dispute with him over the payment of their passage money, which the Indian Church had promised; but they remained and officiated, Mar Gregorios surviving till 1773 and Mar Ivanios till 1794. It was an Indian bishop consecrated by Mar Gregorios in his old age who founded the independent diocese of Toḷiyur in North Kerala, whose bishops were to be useful on several occasions in the nineteenth century as consecrators of Metrans for the Jacobites. In the time of these foreign bishops Mar Thoma VI, aiming at a union of Jacobites and Romo-Syrians, decided to put his status beyond doubt by getting himself consecrated afresh by them. In 1770 he was ordained by Mar Gregorios in the presence of Mar Ivanios to all orders of the ministry from the lowest to that of bishop, and took the title of Mar Dionysios. He is known as Mar Dionysios I, or the Great.

In the latter part of the eighteenth century Malabar, like the eastern side of the peninsula, suffered the ravages of war. Some 10,000 Syrian Christians are said to have perished in the invasion of Tippoo Sultan in 1789, and many churches were destroyed, including the cathedral church of Angamali. At Arthad in North Kerala the Christians were hanged on trees round their churches. The following years saw the expansion of the State of Travancore at the expense of certain minor states, and the establishment of British power in this part of India. Cochin was taken from the Dutch in 1795. Tippoo was defeated in 1799. From 1800 a British Resident was appointed to Travancore and Cochin. The British connexion had an immediate effect on the history of the Syrian Church, because the first two Residents, Colonel Macaulay (1800-1810) and Colonel Munro (1810-1819) were Protestant Christians of strong convictions, who interested themselves in its affairs, especially those of the Jacobites.

Probably at the suggestion of Colonel Macaulay the Madras Government sent its senior chaplain, Richard Kerr, in 1806 to investigate the state of the Syrian Church. He reported the Jacobites a community of 70,000—80,000, mostly cultivators and artizans, living entirely inland, attentive to their religious duties and to their clergy, respected by the Rajah and the Nairs and remarkable for their veracity and plain dealing. 'To unite

them to the Church of England', he remarked, 'would in my opinion be a most noble work'.[1] Later in the same year Claudius Buchanan from Calcutta on his tour of South India made a longer stay among them, which lasted into 1807. He found fifty-five churches of the Jacobites, but thought the general body of the Church 'ignorant and formal and dead', though there were notable exceptions. Many of the priests knew Syriac well. He had several conversations with Mar Dionysios I, whom he describes as 'a man of highly respectable character in his Church, eminent for his piety and for the attention he devotes to his sacred functions', and as 'far superior in general learning' to the other clergy. 'You have come', said the Metran, 'to visit a declining Church, and I am now an old man, but the hopes of its seeing better days cheer my old age, though I may not live to see them.' When Buchanan suggested the desirability of translating the Syriac Bible into Malayalam, the Metran welcomed the idea and undertook to superintend the work himself, calling the most learned of his clergy to his aid. The four gospels were ready by 1807, and Buchanan had them printed at Bombay. He too, since his coming among the Syrians, 'had cherished the hope that they might one day be united with the Church of England', and he ventured to raise this subject in one of his talks with Mar Dionysios, urging that such a union would enable Anglican missionaries to preach in Syrian churches and 'aid them in the promulgation of true religion', and enable Syrian clergy to minister to Anglican congregations in other parts of India, where Indian clergy were greatly needed. When the Metran expressed some doubt as to the possible effect on the Syrian Church, Buchanan assured him that the Church of England would not wish to harm it, but rather 'to promote its welfare, to revive its spirit and to use it as an instrument of future good' in British India. After some further discussion and a consultation with his clergy Mar Dionysios gave in writing a qualified approval to the notion of some mutually agreed connexion with the Church of England.[2] Buchanan's description of his tour among the Syrians in his book *Christian Researches in Asia* (1811) after his return to England aroused much interest there, because until then very little had been known of them. He urged his idea of Anglican aid to the Syrian Church upon the C.M.S.

[1] C. Buchanan: *Christian Researches in Asia* (9th edition), p. 150.
[2] *ibid.*, pp. 128-134.

Colonel Munro, when he became Resident, set himself to help the Jacobite Syrians, partly from a genuine desire to revive a languishing Church and partly from a belief that it would be good for the British *raj* to have the support of a loyal body of Indian Christians of high standing. While he was Dewan of Travancore (1811-1815) as well as Resident, he used his authority to redress their political grievances and to give important posts to members of the community. They were exempted from certain taxes and other duties to Hindu temples that had been required of them, and some of them were appointed as judges and others to posts in the public services. Thus, when Ittoop (Joseph) Ramban,[1] a Syrian priest with a project for building a seminary at Kottayam for the education of the clergy, approached Munro for financial help, he found a willing and powerful supporter. Munro paid over to him the interest, which had accumulated for five years, on a trust fund established for the Syrians by the previous Resident,[2] and obtained from the Rani a grant of land for the seminary, a grant which was later followed by several others. The building, now known as the Old Seminary, was begun in 1813, and the seminary opened in 1815 with Ittoop Ramban as its head. In the same year he was consecrated as Mar Dionysios II (Pulikot Mar Dionysios). But Munro, not content to be the patron of the Jacobites in political and material things only, was planning a reformation of their religious life also. For this purpose he invited the C.M.S. to send out missionaries to work in the Syrian Church and to teach in the seminary, where they would influence the rising generation of the clergy. Working in close co-operation with himself, they would, he hoped, be able to bring about that revival and reformation of the Church, of which it seemed to him to stand in need.

The C.M.S. accepted his suggestion; Thomas Norton, a missionary appointed to Ceylon, was diverted to Travancore; and thus began what is called the Anglican mission of help to the Syrian Church (1816). Apparently Munro had not revealed his plan beforehand to the Metran. When Norton had already

[1] Ramban means 'monk', not necessarily one living in a community.

[2] This fund consisted of 3000 'star pagodas', said to have been obtained by Colonel Macaulay as compensation for wrongs suffered by the Jacobites in the past, and invested by him on their behalf for benevolent purposes. The interest had not been paid because, since the death of Mar Dionysios I in 1808, the succession to the office of Metran had been disputed. Brown, p. 127.

arrived and it was suggested that he should live at the seminary, Mar Dionysios became alarmed and refused to permit it. Instead it was settled that Norton should live at Alleppey and visit Kottayam occasionally, and it seems that permission was given for him to preach in Syrian churches. Other missionaries followed: Benjamin Bailey (later in 1816), Joseph Fenn (1818), Henry Baker (1819). Between the arrivals of Norton and Bailey Mar Dionysios II died. The new Metran, Mar Dionysios III (Punnathra Mar Dionysios, 1817-1825), was willing to co-operate with Munro and the missionaries. Fenn became principal and joint manager of the seminary with the Metran; Bailey besides teaching there did literary work, translating the Bible and other books into Malayalam, and set up a printing press; Baker started a number of schools in Syrian parishes.

The C.M.S. in its instructions to the missionaries had laid it down clearly that they were not sent to proselytize among the Syrians, but to teach 'pure' scriptural doctrine and leave the leaven to do its work. They were outsiders sent to help another Church, to which they themselves did not belong. They were not to make Syrians into Anglicans or assume authority over them, but to bring new ideas which should work from within and help the Syrian Church to reform itself. They were told that even if any of the Jacobites should wish to adopt the liturgy and discipline of the English Church, it would be well not to agree, lest this should lead to ill feeling. The Corresponding Committee at Madras also warned them not to interfere with the Syrians and their Church except in perfect understanding with the Metran. It was a difficult part that they were set to play. They had no canonical authority in the Syrian Church. They were there solely because of Colonel Munro. The plan was his, and it could be carried out only by the consent and co-operation of the Metran and his people. If differences of opinion were to be avoided, the missionaries would have to be men with deep understanding of, and sympathy with, the liturgy, ideas and customs of an Eastern Church very unlike their own, and men of great patience and tact. Unfortunately such knowledge and sympathy were rare in C.M.S. circles in the Church of England in the early nineteenth century, which were strongly Protestant and anti-Catholic. In their eyes Eastern customs were 'the errors of the Greek Church'[1], only a little less pernicious than

[1] This phrase is from a paper by H. Baker (junior), quoted in M. A. Sherring: *The History of Protestant Missions in India*, p. 291.

those of the 'Papists'. When men holding such views undertook such work, trouble was bound to arise sooner or later. Moreover Munro expected and encouraged them to assume a degree of authority far beyond their instructions from the C.M.S. The zealous Colonel was prone to regard the Jacobites as a battalion under his command, with the missionaries as his junior officers.[1]

Fenn, Bailey and Baker did try to carry out the task assigned to them without causing unnecessary friction. As a rule they avoided open criticism. But inevitably there were things in the Syrian Church of which they did not approve, and their own teaching was that of evangelically-minded Anglicans, given with the deliberate intention that it should take root and bear fruit. At heart they wished the Syrian Church to become more like the Church of England. One thing they did, against the advice the C.M.S. had given them, was to translate the Book of Common Prayer into Malayalam and provide Syrian parishes with copies, perhaps as a model of what they considered a pure and scriptural worship. And they did so far carry out the Colonel's wishes as to attempt certain specific measures of reform, such as the removal of images from churches. As early as 1818 they caused a synod to be convened at Mavelikara, where they proposed that a commission should be appointed to sit with the Metran and make a thorough revision of the Syrian liturgy. To this the synod did not agree. Such proceedings were bound to give rise to misgivings among the Syrians; yet the missionaries' relations with the Metran continued friendly, whatever his private feelings might be, all the days of Mar Dionysios III; and while the community enjoyed the special favour of Colonel Munro much might be endured. This motive for co-operation however disappeared with his retirement in 1819, after which they lost some of the privileges he had obtained for them. There was much passive resistance to the idea of reform. On the other hand, in the seminary and elsewhere there were some who were inclined to accept the missionaries' teaching. Between these and the conservatives a tension developed.

This began to show itself in 1825, when Mar Athanasios, a representative of the Patriarch of Antioch, arrived in India and called in question the consecration of Mar Dionysios IV (Cheppat Mar Dionysios, 1825-1855), who had succeeded Mar Dionysios III in that year, and of the aged Bishop of Toliyur, Mar Philo-

[1] See his astonishing letter of 28 February 1817 to Bailey, quoted in Brown, p. 134.

xenos, who had consecrated him. Mar Athanasios claimed that he alone was the rightful Metran, and the conservatives supported him; whereas the missionaries and the reforming party supported Mar Dionysios. On Mar Athanasios's trying to take possession of the seminary by force, petitions were sent to the Government, and the upshot was that in 1826 Mar Athanasios was deported by order of the Dewan, and some priests who had supported him were imprisoned and fined.

In the following year the original missionaries left India, Fenn permanently, Baker and Bailey on furlough; and new men came on the scene in 1833 and 1834, young, arrogant and ultra-Protestant. Dissatisfied at the lack of progress the reforming movement had made, they decided to pursue a more vigorous policy. They began to criticize outspokenly those features of Syrian life and liturgy which seemed to them objectionable (such as references in the liturgy to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and prayers for the faithful departed), and to encourage those who agreed with them to rebel. This conduct naturally gave great offence, though there were some who shared their point of view. They continued preaching in Syrian churches, even when they knew their words were not welcome, and in some instances they even went out of their way to cause offence. One of them, Joseph Peet, nearly caused a riot at a feast in honour of the Blessed Virgin, when he first mingled with the crowd, deliberately defiling their ritual purity by his touch, and then preached a violent sermon against 'superstition'. The result of all this was only to provoke opposition. Mar Dionysios IV, who had at first been friendly with the missionaries, turned against them.

While relations were deteriorating, Bishop Wilson, the Anglican Bishop of Calcutta, visited Malabar in 1835 and, both in an interview with the Metran and in his public sermons, made certain proposals. They included certain changes in the liturgy, the use of Malayalam instead of Syriac in church services, a rule that only men who had been through the seminary and received a certificate from the missionaries should be ordained, and several provisions concerning finance. One of these was that accounts of church properties should be submitted for audit once a year to the Resident or persons nominated by him. Another was that, to avoid undue dependence on fees,[1] an

[1] The income of the clergy was mainly derived from fees connected with weddings and funerals.

endowment fund should be raised. These proposals doubtless were sincerely meant, and the Bishop proved his personal goodwill by offering a subscription of Rs 1000 to the proposed fund; but he must have been extraordinarily insensitive not to realize what sort of an impression his proposals would be likely to make on a community already resenting the interference of the missionaries, and anxious only to maintain its identity and independence. They reflected all too clearly the conviction of those English evangelical churchmen that they knew best what was good for the Syrian Church, and their desire to impose their will on it. The Metran made a non-committal reply, and promised to lay Bishop Wilson's proposals before a synod. The synod met at Mavelikara in January 1836 and rejected them all.

After this matters went from bad to worse. The Book of Common Prayer was openly used for services in the seminary chapel and in some parish churches. The teaching of the missionaries became still more outspoken. On their own authority they appointed four Syrian priests of their party to revise the liturgy. The extent to which confidence had broken down was shown by a deplorable incident on Palm Sunday 1836, when Peet, having heard that the Metran wanted to get hold of the title deeds of the seminary properties, had the lock of the treasury room forced and carried them off to his own house. By this time the mission of help was at an end. Deacons were forbidden to attend the seminary and any who did continue to attend were excommunicated. Early in 1837 the Metran proclaimed in all his congregations that the missionaries were no longer allowed to preach in Syrian churches. Finally (1840) the properties and endowments which had been managed jointly by the Metran and the missionaries were divided by arbitrators into two categories, one to be handed over to the Syrians, the other to be held in trust by the missionaries, the secretary of the Corresponding Committee of the C.M.S. and the Resident, and used for the benefit of the Syrian community according to the original donors' intentions. The income from the endowments allotted to the Syrians was to be paid to trustees, the Metran and two others appointed by the community.

After the breach the mission continued alongside the Jacobite community but no longer within it. In 1838 the C.M.S. decided that it must in future be a mission to non-Christians rather than to the Syrian Church. Contact with the Syrians however was maintained through the schools, especially the high school at

Kottayam and the new college which the C.M.S. built there with its share of the revenues of the old seminary. The seminary itself naturally remained with the Syrians.

The immediate result of these unfortunate events was that some of those Syrians who had welcomed the missionaries' teaching wanted to leave their own Church and become Anglicans. Soon after the synod of 1836 a whole congregation at Mallapalli asked to be taken over. Hitherto, in accordance with the policy laid down by the C.M.S., no Anglican congregation had been formed, and even now the missionaries hesitated before taking a step which would create a permanent division; but in the end they agreed. Afterwards other congregations and individuals followed, and so a branch of the Anglican Church became established in Malabar, consisting largely, though not entirely, of seceded Syrians. The branch grew and became a diocese in 1879. It now forms the Central Travancore diocese of the Church of South India.

The further result however was the continuance of a reforming party within the Jacobite community and eventually another schism and the emergence of the Mar Thoma Church. The majority of those who had been influenced by the evangelicalism of the missionaries remained in the Jacobite Church and continued to maintain and advocate their point of view. Their leader was Abraham Malpan[1] (1796-1845), vicar of Maramon his native place, where he had been ordained deacon as a boy and priest at the age of sixteen.[2] He was a teacher at the seminary, and was one of the four priests appointed by the missionaries to revise the Syrian liturgy; the revision indeed is commonly spoken of as his. Besides using the revised liturgy in his parish he broke a statue in the church there, with which an annual festival was connected, and in 1837 he stopped the festival. For all this he and his deacons and congregation were excommunicated by Mar Dionysios IV. There were at this time only two other congregations in which the revised liturgy was in use. It became the object of Abraham Malpan and his friends to get Mar Dionysios replaced by another Metran favourable to their point of view. He knew

[1] Malpan means teacher of Syriac.

[2] Such early ordinations were common among the Jacobite Syrians, and the fees from them were a source of income to the Metrans. This was one of the practices which the missionaries had criticized and tried to stop. Among the Romo-Syrians it had been stopped long ago by the Portuguese.

that there were many among the Jacobites who were opposed to Mar Dionysios, as they had been in the affair of 1825, though they had supported him at the synod of 1836, and that they were already writing to the Patriarch of Antioch asking for a fresh appointment. With this end in view he caused his nephew, a deacon called Matthew, to be sent to the Patriarch at Mardin in Syria (1841). Matthew spent two years there, and in spite of his being under excommunication and in spite of the letters of Mar Dionysios he won the Patriarch's favour and was ordained by him to all orders up to that of bishop. He returned to India in 1843 as Mar (Matthew) Athanasios, and with the support of his uncle's party and Mar Dionysios's other opponents claimed to be Metran.

A long dispute ensued. Protests were sent to the Patriarch, who in 1846 sent a bishop called Mar Kurilos to investigate allegations made against Mar Athanasios. Mar Kurilos excommunicated Mar Athanasios, using for the purpose blank papers bearing the Patriarch's signature. Mar Dionysios then resigned and petitioned the Travancore Government to recognize Mar Kurilos as Metran. (Because of the frequent disputes a custom had grown up since 1816 that the governments of Travancore and Cochin should officially proclaim the Jacobite Metran, and that thereafter only those so proclaimed should be recognized as legitimate). A committee set up by the Government and the Resident pronounced Mar Kurilos's documents forgeries and Mar Athanasios the rightful Metran (1848). Another emissary from the Patriarch arrived later, Mar Stephanos, apparently to supersede Mar Kurilos. The Government's reply was to banish both of them from Travancore and Cochin and to proclaim Mar Athanasios as Metran (1852). Mar Kurilos went to North Kerala (British Malabar), Mar Stephanos to England, where he tried to get the order quashed; he did not return to India.

Thus Mar Athanasios was left in possession; but his position was difficult. Personally he had been under Protestant influence and wished, or at any rate was suspected of wishing, to make the changes desired by the reforming party; but he was aware that the majority of the Jacobites would not accept them. Consequently, where the conditions were favourable, he supported the revised liturgy and encouraged Scripture-reading, preaching and Sunday schools; but among the conservatives he kept to the old ways, and at that time he continued to acknowledge the Patriarch of

Antioch, administering the oath of allegiance to him at all his ordinations. A section of the Jacobites however, encouraged by Mar Kurilos, distrusted him and plotted to replace him, as he himself had replaced Mar Dionysios IV. For this purpose they sent a priest called Pulikot Joseph to the Patriarch in 1865 with the request that he be consecrated as their Metran. Joseph returned to India as Mar Dionysios V and petitioned the Government to recognize him instead of Mar Athanasios. This the Government refused to do. All they could suggest was that a test case should be brought in the courts concerning the ownership of church property in a particular place, in the course of which the court would have to decide which of the two Metrans was to be recognized. Thus an evil precedent was set. A series of lawsuits followed, most of which were decided in favour of Mar Athanasios on the ground that he had been proclaimed by the Government. Officially Mar Athanasios was strengthened; but Mar Dionysios had a following. In 1868 Mar Athanasios consecrated a coadjutor-bishop, intended to be his successor, Mar Thomas Athanasios.

Having failed to carry his point in the litigation, Mar Dionysios in 1874 appealed to the Patriarch Moran Mar Peter Ignatius III to come to India in person. This proved to be a master-stroke of policy. The Patriarch, after first visiting England to secure the co-operation of the highest authorities in Church and State, arrived in India in 1875, the first Patriarch ever to visit the country in person. His appearance in Malabar created a great sensation. Many parishes that hitherto supported Mar Athanasios now forsook him and sided with Mar Dionysios and the Patriarch; only the hard core of the reforming party remained. The Patriarch began by publicly excommunicating Mar Athanasios and requesting the Government to withdraw its recognition of him. The Government, after some months' delay, decided to escape from an embarrassing situation by reverting to the policy of non-interference, which had prevailed before British Residents involved them in the affairs of the Syrian Church. A proclamation was issued in March 1876 to the effect that the Government henceforth would have nothing to do with the recognition or non-recognition of Metrans, and that any disputes might be settled in the law-courts. A similar proclamation was made in the State of Cochin also. In June the Patriarch assembled a synod at Mulanturutty, at which the party of Mar Athanasios does not seem to have been represented and the supporters of

Mar Dionysios, in their joy at the favourable turn their fortunes had taken, were more ready than they might otherwise have been to accept all the Patriarch's measures for the reorganization of their Church. Mar Dionysios was to be Metran, but the administration was to be in the hands of a Syrian Christian Association with a managing committee of eight priests and sixteen laymen with the Metran as chairman. The Church was to be divided into seven dioceses, each with its own bishop, and each bishop was to sign and register a document expressing allegiance to the Patriarch of Antioch and acknowledging the Patriarch's right to dismiss him. Mar Dionysios was to be one of the seven. The other six were consecrated by the Patriarch in that year. Having made these and other arrangements he departed for Syria in 1877 after a stay in India of nearly two years.

In the same year (1877) Mar Athanasios died. Estimates of his character differ widely. Bishop Brown calls him a conscientious bishop, 'in knowledge of the Scriptures and theology perhaps the most able Metran the Christians of St Thomas had ever had', and 'a man held in great respect by all sections of the community'. E. M. Philip on the other hand calls him 'an opportunist in the worst sense of the term' and says that in him 'the evil genius was so much in the ascendant that the Syrian community could not endure him'.[1] As the result of the Patriarch's visit and the withdrawal of the Government's support he and his party had been defeated, though he remained in possession of the property of the Church. This now passed to Mar Thomas Athanasios, his successor, who now became leader of the reforming party. But in 1879 Mar Dionysios brought a lawsuit against him for possession of the seminary and its lands. The case went on in all possible courts for ten years and each time the verdict was in favour of Mar Dionysios. After the final decision a number of other suits began, concerning local churches and their property, continuing into the early years of the twentieth century. These too were decided in favour of Mar Dionysios, with the result that the reforming party lost almost all their churches. They became a separate body called the Mar Thoma Syrian Church.

It will be convenient to bring the history of these Syrian communities up to date here before turning back to deal with other matters belonging to the nineteenth century. The Mar Thoma party, left almost entirely without churches or other property,

[1] Brown, pp. 143, 146. Philip, pp. 251, 253.

set itself with great courage to build up a church life of its own, helped by a revival movement which had begun in 1873. Besides providing itself with buildings for worship it has shown a more active and evangelistic spirit than any other Syrian community. The Mar Thoma Evangelistic Association, formed in 1889, carries on a number of schools and ashrams in Malabar and some other parts of India, and has a regular system of training its workers, many of whom are voluntary. Its Maramon Convention, started in 1895 and held annually in February or March, where thirty to fifty thousand people gather to listen to evangelical preachers from various Protestant denominations, is well known. At present the Mar Thoma Church has five bishops, one of whom has special responsibility for the mission work outside Malabar, and a membership of about 200,000.[1] In its liturgy, which is a revised form of the Jacobite Qurbana, and in the social life of the community it retains, though in modified form, its eastern traditions; in theology its affinities are with western evangelicalism. It has limited intercommunion with the Church of South India.

The affairs of the Jacobite section have been more complicated. The reorganization intended by the Patriarch Peter III and promulgated at the synod of Mulanturutty in 1876 was never whole-heartedly accepted by the Church, though for party reasons the synod had agreed, and it was only partially carried out. The seven bishops and dioceses existed; but the actual state of affairs was not seven bishops of equal status directly responsible to the Patriarch, but Mar Dionysios V, claiming and exercising the traditional office of Metran and head of the community, with six suffragans. He continued in office until his death in 1909. In the previous year two priests, chosen by the Church, had been sent to the Patriarch (Mar Abdulla II, who had accompanied Peter III on his visit to India) to be consecrated bishops in place of two who had died. They returned as Mar Givarghese Dionysios and Mar Kurilos, accompanied by a special delegate of the Patriarch, by name Mar Ostatheos. After the death of Mar Dionysios V the Association asked the Patriarch to appoint Mar Givarghese Dionysios as his successor. The Patriarch having agreed, he took office as Mar Dionysios VI (1909-1934).

Soon afterwards the Patriarch himself came to India, and it quickly became apparent that there were differences of opinion as to the precise nature of the patriarchal authority over the Indian

[1] Brown, p. 149.

Church. After a stormy synod at Kottayam (1910) a violent dispute developed between him and Mar Dionysios, and parties were formed. The Metran had already quarrelled with his two fellow-trustees of the Church, and they took the side of the Patriarch. All attempts to make peace having failed, the Patriarch excommunicated Mar Dionysios and appointed Mar Kurilos in his place. Mar Dionysios however refused to submit. Supported by the committee and a general meeting of the Association, who rejected the excommunication and appointed fresh trustees, he continued to officiate as Metran and even went so far as to consecrate *muron* (holy oil), a function usually understood to belong to Patriarchs alone. The Patriarch returned to Syria in the autumn of 1911, leaving the Jacobites split into two parties with two persons, Mar Dionysios and Mar Kurilos, claiming to be Metran.

In spite of their defiance of Mar Abdulla, Mar Dionysios and his party wished to find a way of obtaining some kind of Patriarchal recognition. They therefore invited to India Mar Abdulla's predecessor, Mar Abdul Massih, who had succeeded Mar Ignatius Peter III as Patriarch but was now no longer in office, his recognition by the Turkish Government, which then ruled Syria, having been withdrawn. Whether that Government withdrew recognition because he had already been deposed by a synod of his Church or for some other reason is disputed. Mar Abdul Massih at any rate came to India in 1912 and during his stay not only consecrated three new bishops but created a new office, that of 'Catholicos', apparently on the analogy of the ancient Catholicos of the East.[1] The intention was to provide the Indian Jacobites with a 'local Patriarch', as Bishop Brown neatly expresses it; that is to say a person empowered to consecrate bishops and do all other acts without first getting permission from the Patriarch of Antioch, though acknowledging in some way the spiritual supremacy of the Patriarch. It was a move to secure full local autonomy. The person selected for the office was Mar Ivanios, the sole survivor of the six bishops consecrated by the Patriarch Peter III thirty-six years previously. As Catholicos he took the title of Mar Baselios. Before leaving India Mar Abdul Massih signed a document giving the Indian bishops authority to consecrate a new Catholicos whenever the office should become

[1] See above, p. 24. Why the Nestorian title Catholicos was preferred to the usual Jacobite title Maphrian is not clear.

vacant.[1] The doubt was whether Mar Abdul Massih had authority to do all this. The other party contended that he had not, because he had been deposed. On the other side it was claimed that the Turkish Government's action deprived him only of jurisdiction within that Government's domains, but not of spiritual authority generally. At any rate the office of Catholicos has continued; the present holder, Mar Baselios Givarghese II, is the third in succession. As long as Mar Dionysios lived however, he continued to be the party's Metran and effective leader. After his death in 1934 the third Catholicos was elected Metran, and the two offices merged into one. In that year the party took a new step by adopting a written constitution which they had drawn up for themselves, and a new name, the Orthodox Syrian Church of Malabar.

In spite of many attempts made to heal the division (some of which seemed to come very near to success) there existed for forty-eight years two parallel bodies among the Jacobites, not differing in doctrine or liturgy, but each having its own set of bishops, one body owning allegiance to the Patriarch of Antioch, the other to the Indian Catholicos. The latter was the larger. According to the figures given by Nicholas Zernov in his book *The Christian East*, published in 1956 towards the end of the period, the party of the Catholicos had at about that time ten bishops and a community of about 450,000; the Patriarch's party five bishops and a community of about 250,000.[2] Moreover from the time when the two parties first emerged there was prolonged litigation between them to determine which was legally entitled to the funds and properties. One suit, lasting from 1913 to 1928, ended in the recognition of Mar Dionysios VI as lawful Metran. Another, begun in 1936 after his death, appeared to have ended in 1951 with a decision of the Travancore Court of Appeal in favour of the Patriarch; but the matter was taken to the Supreme Court of India, which at length in 1958 decided in favour of the Catholicos. Not long after this verdict was made known, it was announced that the Patriarch had accepted the situation and recognized the Catholicos, who on his part had acknowledged the spiritual supremacy of the Patriarch, and

[1] He crowned his career by joining the Roman Church after his return to his own country. Tisserant: *Eastern Christianity in India*, p. 157.

[2] *op. cit.*, p. 105.

thus a way was opened for the two parties to come together again.[1]

Although party strife and litigation loom so large in Jacobite history, there is evidence of more constructive activity too. Societies such as the Servants of the Cross, founded in 1924, and the Evangelistic Association of the East (1925) do mission work among the depressed classes. There are ashrams and women's societies. Many schools of all grades are maintained and a few colleges also, such as the Union Christian College, Alwaye, and the Catholicate College, Pattanamtitta. In the parishes Sunday schools are organized. The bishops hold annual or half-yearly retreats for the clergy, and there are seminaries for the training of the ministry. There is no doubt that in education, theological training and Christian service the community has made much progress since the times of which we were speaking at the beginning of this chapter. It is no longer 'a declining Church'. It is probably true to say that it is nearer now than ever before to making that contribution to the total life of the Christian Church in India which its antiquity, its eastern tradition and its indigenous background qualify it to make.

On the subject matter of this chapter see E. M. Philip: *The Indian Church of St Thomas*, chapters XX-XXIV, XXVIII and appendices VII-XIII; L. W. Brown: *The Indian Christians of St Thomas*, pp. 125-162; E. Tisserant: *Eastern Christianity in India*, chapter VII.

[1] Newspaper report, *Madras Mail*, 19 December 1958.

CHAPTER XI

MISSIONS AND THE NINETEENTH CENTURY RENAISSANCE

MODERN Indian history begins in the nineteenth century with the consolidation of British rule and the impact of western ideas on the social, political and religious life of the country through the medium of the English language. It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that the Indian civilization we know to-day is the effect of English education on the old culture. Yet the British were slow and often reluctant to introduce this leaven which has proved so potent. Until 1829 Persian continued to be the language of courts and cutcherries, and when after 1813 money was set aside for public education, there was a long controversy how it was to be spent: whether on a classical education based on the old learning in Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic, or on a modern western type of education given in English. Up till 1835 the prevailing opinion was in favour of the old classical learning, and the Government's money was mainly used to subsidize such institutions as the Sanskrit colleges of Benares and Poona; but there were some who argued that the old learning was antiquated and unsuited to the needs of the age, that modern knowledge ought to be taught instead, and that English was the only possible medium through which to teach it. Some Indian and European 'Anglicists', as they were called, put their ideas into practice in 1817 by opening in Calcutta a *vidyalaya*, which after a shaky start received Government help and became known as the Hindu College. Those who taught here were men who had imbibed the rationalist, atheistical philosophy introduced in Europe in the eighteenth century. Consequently the teaching in the college, with its stress on the self-sufficiency of human reason and its depreciation of the supernatural, offered the sharpest possible contrast to the traditional religions of India. The novelty of this point of view had its attraction, and thus there came into existence a class of intelligent, English-educated young men who delighted in destructive criticism of orthodox Hinduism. The extremists among them were men who had lost all faith in the religion of their fathers, but had no other faith to put in its place. Orthodox Hindus were scandalized, and even

the Christian missionaries, themselves vigorous critics of Hinduism, disapproved of such irreligion. Yet a desire for English education had been kindled, which no disapproval could quench.

This was the state of affairs in Calcutta in 1830, when Alexander Duff, a young missionary sent by the Church of Scotland, was shipwrecked (for the second time in one voyage) at the mouth of the Hooghly, and made his way to the city after a night spent uncomfortably in an inhospitable village, muddy but undismayed. A man of keen intellect, who united to religious zeal abounding energy and self-confidence, he had been sent to start an educational mission in Bengal. Left free to choose his own mode of operation, he quickly perceived the effect already made by English education and the rising desire for it, and he determined to put this to Christian use. He would open a school, to become in due course a college, where eventually all the subjects of a liberal education should be taught in English, not from a secular or sceptical point of view, as in the Hindu College, but definitely from the standpoint of the Christian Faith, with the Bible in the place of honour and a daily Scripture lesson in every class. The destructive effect of modern knowledge on old, unreformed Hinduism was plain; Duff planned to assist in the work of demolition, but at the same time to build up a structure of Christian truth by giving positive Christian teaching. He believed that modern scientific knowledge of itself would be fatal to Hindu belief, and that, if accompanied by Christian teaching, it would be a preparation for the Gospel.[1]

All but one of the missionaries whom he consulted advised him against his plan; but, encouraged by that one, the veteran Carey, and with the active help of the Hindu reformer Ram Mohun Roy, the founder of the Brahmo Samaj, he hired a building and opened his school, with five pupils. He began at the very beginning, teaching the ABC, but doing it in a fresh and interesting way with abundant use of question and answer. Later he composed for himself a series of graded text-books. After some hesitation, which Ram Mohun Roy's patronage helped to overcome, more pupils joined the school, till it became an institution of 150 to 200 boys, organized in two departments, one English and one Bengali,—for it was not his plan to abandon the regional language entirely. At the end

[1] He underestimated the recuperative powers of Hinduism, and of course he could not foresee the later conflict of science and religion in the West after Darwin.

of the first year a public *viva voce* examination was held in the Freemasons' Hall, at which the boys astonished everyone present by the way in which they answered questions not only on English grammar, arithmetic and other school subjects, but also on the Bible and the teachings of Christianity. The examination was reported in the newspapers and became the talk of the town. Doubts were laid to rest, and from that day the success of the school was assured. In due time the boys passed on to college classes, and a building was built, which became known as the General Assembly's Institution.

Outside his own school Duff soon made contact with students of the Hindu College. Wishing to confront these emancipated young men with a reasoned presentation of Christianity, he arranged a course of lectures to be given at his own house by several different missionaries. The course began, but had to be broken off after the first lecture because of the public outcry that was raised,—not by the contents of the lecture, which was not controversial, but by the mere report that the students had attended a lecture at the house of a missionary. The college authorities forbade their students to attend religious meetings; but the students, indignant at this restriction, held debating societies of their own in private, and Duff, with their permission, used to attend some of these meetings and was sometimes asked to address them. The mood of these young firebrands may be judged from the words of one of them during a debate on 'Whether females ought to be educated'. He said, 'Is it alleged that female education is prohibited, if not by the letter, at least by the spirit of some of our Shasters? If any of the Shasters be found to advance what is so contrary to reason, I for one will trample them under my feet'.[1] In the same defiant mood a group of them, gathered in the family house of the Brahmin Krishna Mohun Banerjea, editor at the age of eighteen of a paper of advanced views, called *The Enquirer*, took it into their heads to try the taste of beef, and afterwards to throw the remnants of the meat over the wall into the next compound, shouting 'Beef, beef!' But this was more than the orthodox could stand. Krishna Mohun Banerjea's house was soon filled with a crowd of angry Brahmins whom no apology would pacify, demanding his expulsion from family and caste. The family, itself threatened with excommunication and unable to make him promise to return to orthodoxy,

[1] G. Smith: *Life of Alexander Duff*, I p. 150.

was obliged to turn him out. He and his friends left the house that very night, escaping with difficulty from the hostile crowd.

This affair had an unexpected sequel. While Banerjea and his friends were in the wilderness, still defiant, still glorying in their attacks on orthodox Hindu notions and proclaiming that their mission was to reform the Hindu nation, Duff sought them out and gave them friendship and good advice. He urged upon them that it was not enough to be merely destructive, that reformers needed some positive principles, and that it behoved those who called themselves 'enquirers' to inquire whether Christianity did not provide the principles they needed. They agreed to meet at his house once a week to hear what he had to say, and to discuss the question. Thus throughout the next few months Duff lectured on Christian evidences to a group of from forty to sixty of them, the lectures being followed by vigorous discussions. The result was that between August 1832 and April 1833 four of them accepted the Christian Faith and were baptized. The first was Mohesh Chunder Ghose. He was followed by Krishna Mohun Banerjea himself, afterwards to become a much respected Anglican clergyman and one of the most eminent public figures in Bengal. Soon after came Gopinath Nandi, who later became a minister in the Presbyterian Church. All these had been students in the Hindu College. The fourth was Anundo Chunder Mozoomdar, a youth from Duff's own school. The conversion of four young men of education and high caste was a new thing. It showed that Christianity was not merely the refuge of the ignorant and backward and despised, but was to be reckoned with as a serious alternative to the secularism which had hitherto been the only fruit of an English education. It became a burning question among the growing number of the English-educated, and a lively discussion went on both by word of mouth and in the press. Many felt the attraction of Christianity, though few were prepared to go as far as Baptism.

The success of Duff's educational work was a powerful argument on the side of those who were trying to persuade the Government to promote English education. The controversy over Government policy was still going on; but the Anglicists, led by Trevelyan and Macaulay, were winning. The turning point was reached in 1835, when the Governor-general, Lord Bentinck, issued a decree reversing previous policy and declaring that in future Government funds would be mainly used for 'imparting . . . a knowledge of English literature and science

through the medium of the English language'. It was another nineteen years before another famous statement of policy, the Educational Despatch of Sir Charles Wood (1854), laid down the main lines of the modern system of public education. Departments of Public Instruction were to be established in each province and universities in the capital cities, and connected with these there was to be a coordinated series of schools, some maintained by the Government but most under private management receiving grants-in-aid from the Government, provided that the schools satisfied the Departments' requirements in buildings and equipment, staff and standard of work.

Meanwhile it was chiefly Christian schools, without Government grants, which carried on secondary education, and they were free to follow their own policy. The example of Duff's school in Calcutta and the rising demand for modern education led to the foundation of similar schools in other cities. In this activity the missionaries of the Church of Scotland led the way. In Bombay in 1832 John Wilson, backed by a group of interested laymen, started the school out of which the Wilson High School and Wilson College later grew. Similarly in Madras John Anderson founded another 'Institution' in 1837, the ancestor of the Madras Christian College and its High School. A fourth was started at Nagpur in 1844 by Stephen Hislop. Noble College, Masulipatam (C.M.S. 1842) and St John's College, Agra (C.M.S. 1853) grew out of schools founded during this period, to be followed by many other schools and colleges later. The influence exercised by the early English schools, combining a new kind of education with definite Christian teaching, was great and from time to time led to baptisms, each of which stirred up public excitement and for the time being well nigh emptied the school. The converts had to face great hostility from their families, who did all they could to restrain them. If they persisted, sometimes the family, though obliged to cast out the offending member, reconciled itself to the change, as did the father of Anundo Chunder Mozoomdar, who wrote to Duff, 'Convert him in your own way, and make him your follower';[1] at other times they tried to poison him, or performed funeral rites for him as if he were dead, or had writs of *habeas corpus* served on the missionaries, alleging that the convert had been kidnapped or bribed or was under age. Moreover, until 1832

1 G. Smith: *Life of Alexander Duff*, I p. 163.

in Bengal and 1845 in the rest of British India a convert to Christianity lost his right of inheritance, and in some Indian States the disability continued still longer. Until 1866 a married man whose wife ceased to live with him because of his conversion was not allowed to marry again.[1] It was at great personal cost that these conversions took place. So completely were the converts disowned by their people that not infrequently they became entirely dependent on the missionaries, at any rate for the time being; at one time Duff had as many as thirteen of them living on the premises as members of his household. Yet sooner or later the storm would subside, pupils would return to the school and work would go on normally, until the next crisis. The total number of conversions was not large, but they provided the Protestant Missions of the nineteenth century with their foremost Indian leaders and the nucleus of an educated community. Among the early converts in Calcutta who became ministers were Jagadishwar Bhattacharya, Prosunno Kumar Chatterjee, Lal Behari Dey and Behari Lal Singh, besides those already mentioned. The first convert at Bombay was the Parsee boy Dhanjibhai Naoroji, whose baptism in 1839 threw the whole city into an uproar; he and Hormusji Pestonji, baptized in the same year, both became Presbyterian ministers in Western India. After them came another Parsee, Sorabji Kharsedji (1841) and the Brahmin, Narayan Seshadri (1843), who became first a teacher in his old school and later minister in charge of the mission at Jalna.[2] From Masulipatam came Ainala Bhushanam, Manchala Ratnam and Jani Ali; from Agra Tara Chand and Madho Ram; from Madras P. Rajagopal.[3]

After the Government's system of public education envisaged in the Despatch of 1854 came into force, the Mission schools and colleges sooner or later came into it, thereby losing some of their freedom. As more and more schools came into existence, and the necessity of passing examinations loomed ever larger in the consciousness of teachers and pupils, class work tended to become more perfunctory than in the days of Duff, when all was fresh and an eager spirit of inquiry prevailed. Lal Behari Dey, looking back on his student days after thirty-five years, deplored the

[1] Richter, pp. 189, 192.

[2] E. G. K. Hewat: *Christ and Western India*, pp. 95 ff, 116 ff, 121 ff; G. Smith, *op. cit.*, II p 430.

[3] Richter, p. 184; M. A. Sherring: *History of Protestant Missions in India*, p. 393; G. Smith, *op. cit.*, I p. 173.

growth of mechanical note-taking, and also the upsetting of the balance which Duff had maintained between science and literature.[1] Moreover, since the Government had to be neutral in religious matters, a certain secular bias came in; for, although Scripture continued to be taught in Christian schools, it was not one of the subjects inspected or included in the public examination, and therefore no longer appeared to hold the place of central importance. Survivors of the earlier generation, such as Ganpatrao Navalkar of Bombay in 1892, were wont to deplore the lessening of direct evangelistic teaching leading to conversions.[2] Perhaps such praisers of time past took too little account of a changed climate of opinion in the country. Perhaps also the conversion of immature school-boys to Christianity during what we should now call their minority is a questionable aim for a Christian school.[3] But there certainly was a slackening of the original impetus, and the connexion with Government had something to do with it. The Basel Mission in South India felt the position to be so unsatisfactory that it withdrew its schools from the Government system in 1860, and tried to carry them on with full freedom independently, only to return to it again in 1867 because of the impossibility of competing with Government schools.[4] From time to time the question was asked whether Christian Missions were right in devoting so much of their time and resources to the education, much of it secular, of non-Christians. The argument that the main justification of Christian schools is the education of children of Christian parents was heard as early as 1855, and led the American Board and later the B.M.S. to restrict their educational work.[5] But these were exceptions; on the whole education, primary, secondary and college, was accepted as a regular part of mission work. The direct effect, measured by actual conversions, was greatly reduced; the indirect effects, such as the maintenance of contact with the educated classes and the diffusion of Christian ideas, remained.

[1] G. Smith, *op. cit.*, I pp. 455 f.

[2] E. G. K. Hewat, *op. cit.*, p. 277.

[3] Dhanjibhai Naoroji was only sixteen at the time of his baptism. The law was different in those days; it seems strange now to read that the High Court of Bombay declared him to be of age. Hewat, pp. 98, 100. The contrary was decided in the case of Narayan Seshadri's brother, Shripat, who was only twelve. *Ibid.*, p. 126.

[4] Richter, pp. 312 ff.

[5] Richter p. 318; Hewat, pp. 169 ff.

In the middle of the nineteenth century a sudden reaction against the ever increasing British power occurred in North India,—the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. It is not necessary in this book to go into the disputed question of the causes of this revolt, or into its history except in so far as it affected Christians. It was not specifically an anti-Christian movement; but, inasmuch as it was anti-British, missionaries as well as other Europeans were attacked, and Indian Christians also suffered because of their connexion with Europeans. In their case there was sometimes an element of religious persecution as well, in that those who fell into the hands of the rebels were pressed to abjure the Faith and ill treated or killed if they refused. Thus the lately founded Christian communities in North India had their martyrs and confessors. One of the former was Dhokal Parshad, headmaster of a school of the American Presbyterian Mission, who with his wife and four children was lined up on the parade ground at Fatehgarh along with the Europeans. The sepoys offered to let him and his family go free, if he would first renounce Christianity; but he replied in words reminiscent of St Polycarp, 'What is my life, that I should deny my Saviour? I have never done that since the day I first believed on Him, and I never will.' The whole party was then fired upon with grape-shot, and the survivors were despatched with swords.[1] Another was Chaman Lal, a sub-assistant surgeon of Delhi, much respected for his exemplary Christian life, who was killed in his own house. In the same city the Baptist catechist Wilayat Ali, a convert from Islam, bravely confessed his faith when seized by Muslim sepoys: 'Yes, I am a Christian, and am resolved to live and die a Christian', and he died with the prayer of St Stephen on his lips, 'O Jesus, receive my soul'.[2]

Gopinath Nandi, one of Duff's first converts, at this time a minister with the American Presbyterian Mission at Fatehpur, made a hazardous journey as a refugee with wife and children from there to Allahabad, only to fall into the hands of Mohammedan rebels there. The Christians were threatened with mutilation, unless they would renounce Christianity and accept Islam. Both husband and wife refusing, they were given three days to consider, and were held captive with others in a *serai* where the

[1] Richter, p. 205; Smith, *op. cit.*, II p. 340.

[2] Sherring, *op. cit.*, p. 200.

rebels had their headquarters. Here Gopinath Nandi was put in the stocks for his attentions to a wounded English officer who was brought in. The three days passed; but the threat of mutilation, though often repeated, was not carried out. On the sixth day the rebels were defeated in an engagement with British and Sikh troops, and the prisoners were released.[1] About twenty mission workers (with wives and children included) are known to have lost their lives in the Mutiny; how many other Indian Christians suffered it is impossible to say. Of missionaries, chaplains and members of their families the number is given as thirty-seven.[2] The numbers are comparatively small, because the Mutiny was mostly confined to Uttar Pradesh and some adjoining districts, an area where mission work had not long been established and the Christian community was not large. South India, where most Indian Christians lived, was not affected at all.

The immediate consequence of the Mutiny was the end of the East India Company. From 1858 India came under the government of Queen Victoria. In spite of the efforts of evangelicals in England, who wanted the new Government to commit itself to a policy of encouraging Christian propaganda and requiring Scripture teaching in government schools and colleges, the Queen's proclamation, though it contained an acknowledgement of Christian belief, clearly disclaimed any intention to impose that belief on her subjects. The famous sentence runs: 'Firmly relying Ourselves on the truth of Christianity, and acknowledging with gratitude the solace of religion, we disclaim alike the Right and the Desire to impose Our convictions on any of Our subjects'. Thus the Government professed itself neutral as between the different religions of India. Individual officers might show interest in Christian work in their private capacity; but the Government as such took no part. Nevertheless the removal of the last traces of the Company's former attitude of opposition, and the security and orderly administration of the new regime, together (let it be admitted) with British prestige in the eyes of a populace which seldom distinguished clearly between the Euro-

[1] Gopinath Nandi's narrative, quoted in G. Smith, *op. cit.*, II pp. 344ff.

[2] For a list see G. Smith, *op. cit.*, II pp. 340ff, compiled from M. A. Sherring: *The Indian Church during the Great Rebellion.*

pean missionary and the European government officer,[1] made a very favourable environment for Christian missions to develop in. The activities of missions increased greatly in the second half of the nineteenth century; it was indeed the century of foreign missions. New societies came in, such as the Methodist Episcopal Church of America[2], the University Missions, the English, Irish and Canadian Presbyterians, the Canadian Baptists, the Society of St John the Evangelist, and others; old societies, such as the C.M.S. and the W.M.M.S., extended their work into new areas; till hardly any part of the country was without a Christian mission somewhere at work in it.

Throughout the middle years of the nineteenth century there continued to be a movement towards Christianity among the educated classes. One by one notable men, weighing Christianity against their ancestral religion, whether Hinduism, Zoroastrianism or Mohammedanism, were coming to the conviction that it was the true Faith, and were being baptized, often after a severe mental struggle and at the cost of painful separation from their families. Such were Nehemiah Goreh (baptized in 1848), the Brahmin *shastri* who became a Christian *shastri* who helped many others to the Faith by his books, lectures and conversations; the mathematician Ram Chandra of Delhi (1852); Vishnupant Bhaskar Karmakar of Ahmednagar (1853); Baba Padmanji of Belgaum and Bombay (1854), an able Christian writer in Marathi; Ganpatrao Raghunath Navalkar (1860), church leader and outspoken critic of missionary methods in Bombay; and others. And there were many Hindus who, though they never became Christians, abandoned idolatry and formed the habit of reading the Bible at home and even of praying in the manner they had learnt at their Christian schools. Whether by open conversion or secret discipleship, it did seem as if Christianity were making headway among people who counted. It was an age of ferment under the influence of western culture, a ferment whose first effect was dissatisfaction with Hinduism in the stagnant, unreformed state in which it then was; and to many religious men who felt the influence most keenly the Christianity of the

[1] The existence of an Ecclesiastical Department maintaining bishops, chaplains and churches in certain centres provided some ground for this idea.

[2] Actually the mission of the M.E. Church began six months before the Mutiny. William Butler, its first missionary, arrived in Bareilly, U.P., in December 1856.

West was the most challenging alternative. On the Christian side hopes were entertained that the spread of western and Christian influences would soon bring about a general movement, and even non-Christians were sometimes heard to say, 'In thirty or forty years we shall all be Christians'.[1]

But this never happened. Occasional conversions of gifted individuals continued, and were still occurring in the closing years of the century: Pandita Rama Bai in 1883, Narayan Vaman Tilak, the Christian poet of Maharashtra, in 1895; but they were becoming fewer. Meanwhile Hinduism, with its immense power of absorption, had begun to reform itself and adapt itself to the modern world, and the potent force of nationalism began to appear. In Bengal the Brahmo Samaj, a society for religious and social reform, which had existed since 1828, developed greatly under the influence of Keshab Chandra Sen from 1865. The Prarthana Samaj, its counterpart in Bombay, was formed in 1867. The Ramakrishna Mission, with its teaching, to become so pervasive, that all religions are ultimately one, grew out of the life and teaching of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa from about 1870 onwards. The Arya Samaj, a more militant organization for the reform and defence of Hinduism, began in 1875. The Indian National Congress, ultimately the most influential of all the new movements, was founded in 1885. Thus there began to be an abundant choice of alternatives for the educated man who became dissatisfied with orthodox Hinduism.[2] As the nineteenth century passed over into the twentieth, reinterpretations of Hinduism and, above all, political nationalism gathered strength and turned men's minds away from Christianity.

Among the growing activities of Christian missions in the nineteenth century, particularly in the second half of it, was work for women. Except that a few little girls had been taught in the primary schools of the early Protestant missions of the previous century, little had yet been done or could be done. In those days of child marriage, female infanticide, the burning of widows, and, in North India, the purdah system, there was little thought of the emancipation of women. Moreover, since reading and writing were practically confined to nautch girls, the idea was prevalent that education was not for respectable

[1] Hewat, p. 205. [2] On this subject see J. N. Farquhar: *Modern Religious Movements in India.*

women. When therefore the Calcutta students in 1831 debated the subject of female education, they were handling a new and revolutionary idea. Yet even then a few girls' schools existed, thanks to the initiative of certain missionaries' wives, such as Mrs Marshman of Serampore (1818) and Mrs Wilson of Bombay, aided by committees of well-wishers, such as the Calcutta School Society (1819) in India and the Society for Promoting Female Education in the East, formed in London in 1834. An English lady, Miss Cooke, (afterwards Mrs Wilson[1]), the first to be sent out specially for this kind of work, was already organizing schools for girls in Calcutta with a measure of official support. These early schools worked under great difficulties. Those who attended were rough low caste girls, who often had to be paid to attend, and they came so irregularly and left at such an early age that their schooling had little permanent effect. Only very slowly was prejudice overcome. Yet one result of the spread of English education among men was that fathers did begin to desire education for their daughters. Among the earliest to do so were the Parsees of Bombay. In Calcutta the first school for high caste girls was a secular one founded in 1849 by a public-spirited civilian, Drinkwater Bethune, president of the Government's Council of Education, with the help of Pandit Ishvara Chandra Vidyasagara of the Brahmo Samaj. The missionaries in 1854 began a policy of sending Christian ladies to teach girls in the zenanas of Hindu families. Mrs Mullens and an Anglo-Indian lady, Miss Toogood, were prominent in this work in Calcutta. Thus began the system of zenana schools, which was copied in other towns and became a regular feature of the educational system, receiving grants-in-aid from the Government, who appointed lady inspectors. After some years of this Duff judged that the time was ripe for the opening of a Christian day school for girls in 1857. In 1859 the American Presbyterian Mission started a girls' boarding school at Dehra Dun, from which in due time came the first female matriculate of Calcutta University.[2]

The growth of zenana visitation, which had been begun by missionaries' wives, led to women missionaries' being sent to India by the missionary societies in increasing numbers specifically for women's work. It led also to the foundation of special socie-

[1] Not to be confused with Mrs Wilson of Bombay.

[2] Richter, pp. 329 ff; Sherring, pp. 187 f.

ties for this purpose, such as the Zenana Bible and Medical Mission and the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society (1881). Prominent among the lady missionaries from America was Isabella Thoburn, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, who came to Lucknow in 1870 and founded a school out of which the Isabella Thoburn College developed. Gradually school work left the zenanas and was carried on in schools in the ordinary sense of the word, and the number of girls' schools increased, though the numbers in the higher classes tended to be small. In 1884 two Christian girls in Bombay, Miss Malabai Kukde and Mrs Shevantibai Nikambe, became the first Indian girls to pass the matriculation examination of Bombay University. In the following year two Parsee girls joined Wilson College.[1] By the end of the century women's education was well under way.

No one has done more for the emancipation of women in India than Pandita Rama Bai (1858-1922). Hers is a most unusual history. Her father, a Maratha Brahmin settled in the Western Ghats of South Kanara, was a man of such independent views that he taught his wife Sanskrit. Financial troubles compelled the family, while she was an infant, to leave their home and begin a pilgrim life, wandering from one sacred place to another, spending a few months in each, performing religious rites and earning a living by reciting the Puranas in public, for they were Puranikas. This continued throughout the whole of her childhood and adolescence. When she was old enough, she too learnt Sanskrit and took part in the recitation. Her father, again defying convention, devoted her to a religious life and did not give her in marriage. Caught in the great famine that desolated South India in 1876, the family suffered terribly; her father, mother and sister all died of starvation. She and her brother wandered on, and in 1878 came to Calcutta, where the appearance of a young woman so well versed in the Sanskrit Puranas caused a sensation among the pandits. Here for the first time she came into contact with Christians and with the Brahmo Samaj, and found that she had lost faith in the orthodox Hinduism in which she had been brought up. In Brahmo circles she made an unorthodox marriage at the age of twenty-two, after her brother's death, with a Bengali graduate not of her own caste; only to be left a widow by his death within two years.

With her little daughter she returned to Maharashtra and lived

[1] Hewat, p. 286.

for a year at Poona, where she was associated with the Prarthana Samaj and became an advocate of social reform, especially the education and rehabilitation of child-widows. She was also in touch with Fr. Nehemiah Goreh and Christian missionaries, through whom it was arranged that she should go to England to be trained for the work which she intended to do. There, through the teaching and example of the Community of the Sisters of St Mary the Virgin, with whom she lived, and a long letter from Fr. Goreh in India, she became a Christian (1883). After finishing her studies in England she went to America and spent three more years in kindergarten training and training in various handicrafts, and lecturing on women's life in India and the work she hoped to do. So much interest was aroused by her speeches and her book *The High Caste Hindu Woman*, which she wrote in America, that sympathizers formed a Ramabai Association to raise money for her work. It was with the Association's promise to supply the cost of a widows' home for ten years that she returned to India.

The home and school, called Sarada Sadan, was opened in Bombay in 1889 with the co-operation of Mahadev Govind Ranade and other prominent members of the Prarthana Samaj. In the following year it was moved to Poona. But within a very short time there was an outcry that the home was being used for Christian propaganda and that she had broken faith with her supporters, for it had been stipulated that there was to be religious freedom. What had happened was that the girls had been allowed to sit with Rama Bai and her daughter at family prayers, and some of them had said that they wanted to be Christians. The support of most of her Hindu helpers and some of those in America was withdrawn. Nevertheless Sarada Sadan went on. There were at that time about forty child-widows in residence. Some of the money from America was used to buy land at Kedgaon, Poona District, with the intention of starting a farm.

Rama Bai herself, who had been brought to the Faith by Catholic-minded Anglicans and baptized and confirmed in the Church of England, was now passing through an emotional crisis which led her to find her ultimate spiritual home in revivalism. With this background, and inspired by reading of the China Inland Mission and the life of George Mueller of Bristol,[1]

[1] A German-born philanthropist and member of the sect of Plymouth Brethren. He maintained a large orphanage at Bristol in England, relying entirely on prayer and voluntary contributions.

she launched out into a new venture. The immediate occasion was the famine of 1896 in Central India, when she toured the famine area, rescuing orphan girls more in number than her premises in Poona could accommodate. Some she was able to send to Mission boarding homes elsewhere, but she was left with many on her hands. Trusting that help would be forthcoming from friends and supporters, she formed a settlement, called Mukti, on the land at Kedgaon. She was joined in this work by an American lady, Miss Abrams.

In 1898, when the ten years for which support had been promised were up, she visited America again, and a new committee was formed, which undertook to support both Sarada Sadan and Mukti. More American ladies came to join in the work at Kedgaon. Buildings were erected, and in the following years a very large institution was organized, containing over a thousand inmates and providing a wonderful variety of occupations,—field work, dairy farming, weaving, sewing, rope making and so forth, superintended by a large staff, American and Indian, and presided over by Rama Bai herself until her death in 1922. This still continues under the title The Ramabai Mukti Mission.[1]

During her life-time and since there has been an impressive change in the position of women in India. Though something reminiscent of the old state of affairs may still be seen among the more backward classes, girls' education has become the rule rather than the exception, women graduates are plentiful and women are nowadays playing an increasing part in public life. It would be absurd to claim that this is entirely due to the example and work of Christian missions; but we may justly claim that Christians have been in the forefront of the movement for the emancipation of women. The influence of Christian schools and colleges has been outstanding; Christian advocacy has had much to do with social legislation affecting women; and in the Christian community itself the service of women workers, missionaries, teachers, doctors, nurses and Biblewomen, and of the women's organizations in the churches has been one of the most effective agencies both in building up the Church's life and in bearing its witness to the non-Christian society by which it is surrounded.

[1] Pandita Rama Bai's own account of her life and work may be seen in her booklet *A Testimony*, published by this Mission.

Chapter XII

MASS MOVEMENTS: MEDICAL AND TECHNICAL MISSIONS

The conversion to Christianity of educated Brahmins and other high caste men throughout the nineteenth century was of very great value and importance. It gave the Indian Church cultured and intelligent leaders intellectually the equals of the most enlightened non-Christians, and it increased greatly the respect of the latter for Indian Christianity. But the chief numerical growth was not by the conversion one by one of such outstanding individuals, but by mass movements or group conversions among much more lowly sections of the people: some of the Sudra castes, the aboriginal tribes and the depressed classes.

Apart from an abortive attempt of Archbishop Menezes in 1599 to send Christian preachers to one of the hill tribes of Kerala it was not till the middle of the nineteenth century that Christian missions began to pay attention to the many aboriginal peoples of India, the survivors of races displaced by Aryans or Dravidians and never absorbed by Hinduism or Islam. In 1846 a Lutheran mission from Germany, called after its founder Gossner's Evangelical Lutheran Mission, began work in the Chota Nagpur region of Bihar. In 1850 and 1851 a few members of the Oraon and Munda tribes were baptized at Ranchi, and from then onwards an increasing number of those and other tribes, collectively known as Kols, accepted Christianity; by 1857 there was a community of between 800 and 900 scattered among many villages.

From the beginning there was friction between these people and the Hindu and Muslim zemindars of the area. The early converts were persecuted by armed bands which raided their houses and plundered their possessions. Especially in 1857 during the Mutiny, when for a time the rebels were in control and Europeans had fled, the persecution became very severe, the Christians being hunted and driven from their homes and forced to take refuge in the jungle, until the restoration of law and order and the punishment of the chief of their adversaries brought relief. After this there was a rapid increase in the number of converts, prompted, it would appear, by a belief that as Christians

they would enjoy the protection of the British *raj* and be in a better position to face the zemindars. By 1863 the baptized community had risen to 3401. Besides the familiar plan of catechists touring the villages and meeting together with the missionaries for instruction, an efficient system of honorary village elders was organized. Each village with a congregation had its elder, who was responsible for simple services and for discipline, and his recommendation was required before any candidate from that village was baptized. Catechumens were kept on probation for a year or more before Baptism. After Baptism efforts were made to prepare people for communicant membership; but, as often happens in mass movements, the number of communicants lagged far behind the total number of the baptized; for instance, of the 3401 mentioned above only 790 were communicants. At week-ends village Christians would flock into Ranchi for Sunday services at the central church.[1]

In 1869 acute differences of opinion over policy led the senior missionaries to leave Gossner's Mission and join the Anglican Church, taking with them about a third of the community. They became the nucleus of a new mission of the S.P.G. in the area, which also grew rapidly and in 1890 became the Anglican diocese of Chota Nagpur. The majority of the Lutheran Christians however remained with the junior missionaries and continued to be the larger group. For some years the work prospered, but in 1887 another large secession took place, this time to the Roman Catholics,[2] the result of agrarian unrest, and in the following decade a sectarian movement, led by a renegade Christian and combining elements of Christianity, paganism and Mohammedanism, was a further embarrassment. Nevertheless the Lutheran Mission survived these troubles and emerged in 1905 with a community of 67,000. In 1901 the Mission was extended to Assam, where Kols had gone to work on the tea estates. It has now become an autonomous Church, called the Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Church of Chota Nagpur and Assam.

Among another aboriginal people, the Santals on the border of Bengal and Bihar, the work of the C.M.S. (from 1860), the Santal

[1] Interesting descriptions of these services by visitors are to be found in M. A. Sherring: *History of Protestant Missions in India*, pp. 147-150. They are too long to be quoted here.

[2] See below, p. 217.

Mission of the Northern Churches (begun in 1867 by two independent Scandinavians), the Free Church of Scotland (from 1870) and others has resulted in another large body of Christians which also has spread over into Assam. Other communities have been formed among the Gonds and the Bhils of Central India. Assam has been a particularly fruitful field. Since 1841 the Missions of the American and British Baptists and the Welsh Presbyterians (or Calvinistic Methodists) have built up very large communities of the Garo, Naga, Khasi, Jaintia, Lushai and other tribes. In many of the hill villages, where the inhabitants all belong to one tribe, practically the whole village is Christian. The movement has been most rapid in the twentieth century. Writing of the decade 1911-1921 the census commissioner noted one area of 7000 square miles where the Christian population had increased from 2000 to 27,000, and added the remark, 'At the present time it is quite the fashion to be a Christian, and even the chiefs are joining the movement'.[1] In the same area the number more than doubled itself in the next ten years. As the result of these phenomenal movements Assam ranks with Kerala, Madras and Andhra Pradesh as one of the four States of India where the Christian population of the country is chiefly concentrated.

Among communities other than aboriginal tribes we have already mentioned in chapter IX the beginnings of mass movements in South Travancore and Tinnevelly, the most southerly districts of India, early in the nineteenth century. Another early one, which attracted much attention at the time, but only partly fulfilled the hopes it raised, took place in the Krishnagar area of Bengal (in Nadia District, north of Calcutta) in 1838-1840. The southern movements however continued to grow. Tinnevelly was notable for its encouragement of an Indian ministry trained in Tamil for village work. Six men were ordained in 1851, and by the time the centenary of Protestant missions in the district was celebrated in 1880 there were 89 Indian clergy. The baptized community then numbered over 59,000, and the number of villages occupied was reported as 1506.[2] It was in this area also that some of the earliest efforts were made to devise a system of government for the Indian Church, which should lead it towards responsibility and self-government and away from a state of dependence on foreign missions and the personal authority

[1] Quoted in J. W. Pickett: *Christian Mass Movements in India*, p. 52.

[2] Sherring, *op. cit.*, p. 335.

of missionaries as such. The district was divided into parishes, and a series of local and 'circle' councils was evolved, leading up to a central council for the whole district.[1] With variations this church council system, as it was called, has been followed in many other parts of India. Episcopal ministrations had been provided by the Bishop of Madras some 400 miles away; but it was becoming more and more obvious that the growing Church needed an episcopate on the spot. A separate diocese was not at once created; but in 1877 two assistant bishops were appointed, Bishop Caldwell for the S.P.G. area and Bishop Sargent for the C.M.S. area. They were the first Anglican bishops appointed specifically for the Indian Church. Tinnevelly became a diocese in its own right in 1896.

A major feature in the history of South Indian mass movements is the grievous famine of 1876-1878, after which thousands of people of the depressed classes became Christians because of help received. In Tinnevelly the number of the baptized in the S.P.G. area alone was increased by 12,000 in the six years following 1877.[2] But the part of the country where the effect was most pronounced was Andhra Pradesh, and the most conspicuous example is the American Baptist Mission in Nellore District. This Mission had started work there in 1835. From 1866 a movement among the caste called Madigas (leather workers and field labourers) had followed the conversion of a young illiterate *yogi* called Periah.[3] During the famine J.E. Clough, the missionary at Ongole, played an active part in relief work by taking a contract from the Government of Madras for a stretch of the Buckingham Canal, which was then being dug between Madras and Bezwada, and so was able to provide his people and others with employment. His *maistries* were the catechists and teachers of the Mission. As a result of this combination of philanthropy and propaganda multitudes of Madigas asked for Baptism; but Clough, realizing that their main object was work and wages, refused until the famine period was almost over. Then, hearing from some Roman Catholic missionaries that they were prepared to baptize the people if he did not, he gave way. In July 1878 3536 persons were baptized in three days. Baptisms continued

[1] See below, pp. 253 f.

[2] Bishop Caldwell, quoted by Sherring, p. 334.

[3] Pickett, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

in the years immediately after the famine. Four years later the Mission reckoned its community in the Ongole area at well over 20,000.[1] Other Missions in Andhra Pradesh,—the L.M.S. and S.P.G. in the Rayalaseema districts, the C.M.S. in Kistna and Godavari, the American Luthérans in Guntur and Rajahmundry, all had their communities substantially increased after the famine. In all cases work had been going on previously and mass movements of depressed class folk had already begun. The result of the relief work done during the famine was to give them a fresh, and sometimes a spectacular, impetus.

Here it may be noted that both at this and other times the care of famine orphans was a regular feature of mission work in many parts of India. Orphanages, industrial schools and village settlements were developed, which provided the Christian community with many of its recruits (and in time to come many of its problems) even in areas where there was no mass movement, such as the old Mysore State. Most missions in the South were concerned in some way or other with famine relief during the crisis of 1876-1878; but relief work of itself did not create mass movements. Nor were mass movements only the product of famine or other relief. As Dr Pickett is careful to emphasize, some of them owe their origin to the spiritual quest of certain zealous individuals.[2] Moreover they continued long after 1878, and by no means always at famine times, though other famines did occur and had a similar, though smaller, effect. Thus in the present century large communities have been gathered in the parts of Andhra Pradesh and Mysore which were formerly in the dominions of the Nizam of Hyderabad by the Anglicans in Dornakal, the American Methodists in Vikarabad and the British Methodists in Medak, and also in Tamilnad in the districts of Coimbatore, Trichinopoly and Madura by the L.M.S., M.M.S., and American Board. In the Dornakal and Medak areas, and also in the American Lutheran area of Guntur and the Anglican area of Kistna and in one or two other places, movements which began among Adi Andhras have spread to some of the Sudra castes. The usual effect of the conversion of the depressed classes is to repel the Sudras from Christianity; but in these parts of Andhra Pradesh baptisms of Sudras in considerable numbers

[1] Sherring, p. 408; Richter, p. 218; K. S. Latourette: *A History of the Expansion of Christianity*, VI, p. 167.

[2] See Pickett, pp. 38 f, 44 f, 47-50.

have taken place in areas where the other Christians are of depressed class origin.[1]

Nor have mass movements been confined to South India, though they are most numerous there. In Uttar Pradesh most of the Mazhabi Sikh community in the Moradabad District and a sweeper caste called Mehtars in Budaun District became Christians under the American Methodists. The movement among the latter spread also to the C.M.S. and the American Presbyterians. In the Sialkot District of the Punjab under another American mission, the United Presbyterian, the majority of the Chuhra caste became converts to Christianity. Similar but smaller movements have also taken place among the Chamars of Madhya Pradesh and Bihar (American Lutherans and Methodists) and the Dheds of Gujerat (Irish Presbyterian Mission).[2]

It must be admitted that such movements of lowly folk into Christianity are prompted by a variety of motives. Perhaps the predominant one is a desire for social betterment and a conviction that the Christian agencies are interested in them and can help them. There are genuine instances of individual *bhakti*, and where emotional revivalism is practised, religious excitement from this source has also played its part. There are also instances of the mere hope of some material gain. The characteristic of a mass movement is that people come to the Faith in tribal or caste groups, whether large or small, and that the movement spreads to other groups of the same caste or tribe. When this happens, it is inevitable that many persons are included whose knowledge of Christian teaching and interior experience of Christian faith are of the slightest. They come with the rest of their group as the result of a communal, not a personal, decision. They consent to what is being done; it is not a question of compulsion; but the element of conscious religious conviction in their action may be very small.

The movements have been severely criticized from both the non-Christian and the Christian side. Politically minded Hindus, resenting the conversion of the depressed classes to Christianity as a weakening of Hindu solidarity, sometimes

[1] J. W. Pickett, *op. cit.*, Chapter XIII, and *Christ's Way to India's Heart*, pp. 50 f.

[2] Pickett: *Christian Mass Movements in India*, pp. 51 f., 42-45; Latourette, *op. cit.*, VI, p. 177; Sherring, pp. 222, 253.

insinuate that Missions have concentrated on the backward and ignorant because these were less capable of resistance than the orthodox and the sophisticated, and that they have used unworthy means to induce them to become Christians.[1] To the first charge it may be replied that the Missions have indeed gone where the response was greatest, but that it has often been the converts who sought the missionaries rather than the missionaries who sought the converts. To the second it may be said that this charge probably arises by misinterpretation of well-meaning measures to help backward communities. Fee concessions in schools, for example, are an entirely legitimate means of enabling converts' children to be educated; but from a hostile point of view it would be easy to represent them as a kind of bribe. There may well have been occasions when help was given unwisely; but if such help be deliberately held out as an inducement to conversion, or if on the converts' part the expectation of it be made the main motive for seeking Baptism, then the Christian authorities themselves condemn such practices.

On the other hand Christians have criticized the bringing in of large numbers of ignorant and degraded people, whose motives are questionable, whose understanding of the Gospel may be very little, and their Christianity nominal. The only proper basis for conversion, these critics would say, is a sound personal faith on the part of every individual convert. It will be readily agreed that there must be a scrutiny, as careful as may be, of the motives of would-be converts, and that those whose good faith is suspect must be rejected; also that it is all too easy to be deceived in this matter. But to expect full individual conviction from every member of a group of depressed class villagers is to expect the impossible. At their level of life major decisions are social rather than individual. Here and there an outstanding personality may be found, who makes his mind up and is able to make others follow his lead; but in general individuals are not used to deciding for themselves; they act with their group. Thus a man's good faith may be perfect, while his personal religious faith is almost non-existent. He may genuinely desire to become a Christian, as his group leaders have decided, and yet have very little idea what Christianity is. The conversion of

[1] This kind of feeling seems to have lain behind the inquiry into the activities of Christian missions which was sponsored by the Government of Madhya Pradesh in 1954-56.

such a group does not mean that every member of it has a fully formed faith; it means that the group has been willing to accept Christian training and discipline. That is a foundation that can be built upon.

Even individual conversion involves more than a change of belief; it involves a transfer from one society to another, from a Hindu caste to the Christian Church. Perhaps the Hindu recognizes this better than the western Christian with his individualistic way of thinking. That is why the Baptism of the early high caste converts provoked such violent reactions; to leave one's caste is a most serious matter. And that is why the individual high caste convert tended to become a denationalized person, cut off from his own people and obliged to associate with Europeans and with a small and artificial Indian Christian community consisting of individuals so cut off. The strong point of mass movements is that they avoid this violent social dislocation. The converts come without losing their social nexus The community, and not merely a number of separate individuals, enters the Church. The christianizing of this natural community presents its own problems; but there is much more hope of an indigenous Church developing in these circumstances than where the Church is dealing with individuals loose from their social setting. It is probably true to say that Christianity has never become thoroughly acclimatized in any country, so as to influence deeply the national life and culture, except through some kind of mass movement.

For better or worse the mass movements have occurred, and to some extent continue to occur. In the communities so formed the Indian Church has an immense pastoral responsibility.

A new feature of Christian work that came into prominence in the nineteenth century, especially in the latter part of it, was medical missions.[1] No doubt attempts of a non-professional kind

[1] For material on medical missions I have depended on Richter, pp. 346-365, and the C.M.A.I. publications *The Ministry of Healing in India* (1932) and *Tales from the Inns of Healing* (1942), and on papers read by Dr E. S. Chellappa (*A Brief Survey of Health Conditions in India*) and Dr P. D. Sukhnandan (*The Role of the Christian Medical Association of India*) to the East Asia Conference on The Christian in Medical Work in East Asia today, December 1958. I have to thank Dr E. W. Wilder for kindly lending me these C.M.A.I. books and papers, and for other information kindly communicated by letter.

had long been made by missionaries, pastors and catechists to treat sickness; the Tranquebar Mission had even sent an occasional doctor to India, and Carey's companion, Thomas, was a medical man; but organized medical missions are a phenomenon of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is of course in this period that the greatest development of modern medical science has taken place.

The first Mission to adopt a regular policy of sending medical missionaries to India was the American Board. The early ones were men both ordained to the ministry and fully qualified as doctors,—medical evangelists in fact. The first of them, ancestor of a long line of missionaries in South India, was John Scudder, who arrived in Madras (from Ceylon) in 1836. Two of his sons later joined him, and in 1851 the eldest, Henry Scudder, also a medical evangelist, moved out to Arcot to start the Mission with which this family is principally connected.[1] Meanwhile from 1837 other medical evangelists were at work in Madura, where the American Board had begun its mission in 1834. The London Mission started medical work at Neyyoor in South Travancore in 1838; but the development of this into an extensive medical mission with a central hospital and branches came much later. From 1840 the American Baptists had two medical evangelists working in southern Bengal. The first doctor came to Ludhiana in the Punjab in 1842. This was the extent of medical missions before the Mutiny.

Afterwards Missions began to give more attention to medical work. The (Scottish) United Presbyterian Mission began its work in Rajasthan (1860) through medical evangelists such as Shoolbred and Valentine, who took their medicine chests out to villages and combined vaccinations and other medical treatments with the preaching of the Gospel.[2] This led to the establishment of dispensaries, and then hospitals, at Beawar, Ajmer and most of their stations during the next twenty-five years. Similarly the Free Church of Scotland Mission between 1857 and 1903 gradually established hospitals at all its principal stations. Likewise the Basel Mission on the west coast and in what is now North Mysore from 1885 set up hospitals at Calicut,

[1] i.e. the American Arcot Mission. The Dutch Reformed Church of America at first carried on its mission work through the American Board. In 1857 however it formed a mission Board of its own, which took responsibility for the Arcot mission.

[2] See Valentine's description quoted by Sherring, p. 218.

Betgeri and Udipi, and from 1889 the American Presbyterians developed an important medical centre at Miraj in the western Deccan. In short during the second half of the nineteenth century medical work became a recognized branch of service in most missions, and by the end of the century it was developing rapidly and increasing in scope. A simple illustration of its growth may be found in the number of medical missionaries in the country. In 1858 there were only seven in all India (and Pakistan); in 1882 there were 28; but in 1895 the number had risen to 140, and in 1905 to 280.[1] Long before then Indian doctors were sharing in the work. There were 168 of them in 1895.

One particular reason that contributed to this growth was that lady missionaries and their helpers, visiting women in their homes, had brought to light the special need of women for medical aid. They did what they could to meet it by carrying on an improvised medical work themselves in the zenanas. Then a further step was taken when the American Methodists sent out a fully qualified lady doctor, Clara Swain. She began her work in 1870 at Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh, where a women's hospital was opened in 1874 on land given by the Nawab of Rampur.[2] Another American lady doctor, Sara Seward, sent by the American Presbyterian Mission, arrived at Allahabad in 1871. Other lady doctors followed. From 1880 the two British societies founded specifically for work among women, the undenominational Zenana and Bible Medical Mission and the Church of England Zenana Mission, built hospitals for women and children in widely separated parts of India from Amritsar to Krishnagar and from Benares to Bangalore. When the British Methodists took up medical work in the Mysore State at Mysore and Hassan (1906), their hospitals were for women and children. Many other examples might be given.

Another contributory cause was that Missions working in the North-west and in Kashmir tended to find in medical work the most hopeful line of approach to a population largely Muslim. The medical mission of the C.M.S. in Srinagar (1864) became one of the most notable in India, and the same Society had several others in eastern and western Punjab. Other Missions in that region, such as those of the American Presbyterians and the

[1] Richter, pp. 347, 354.

[2] W. C. Barclay: *History of Methodist Missions*, III pp. 507 f; an early example of the generous help which medical missions have again and again received from non-Christians.

Church of Scotland, also gave prominence to medical work and built hospitals, several of them for women and children. Richter calls the Punjab (in the pre-1947 sense of the term) 'the favourite territory of medical missions'.[1]

Apart from such special causes the advance of medical science in the West and the increased attention paid to matters of hygiene tended to make the Missions more conscious of the need for medical service in India generally.

Since medical work requires trained doctors, nurses and compounders, all medical missions were obliged to make some arrangement for training Indian assistants. At first this had to be done by individual missionaries, who formed classes of the available people, generally Christians from mission orphanages and boarding schools, and taught them as best they could in their own hospitals. Some excellent work was done in this way, and continued to be done, so far as nurses and compounders were concerned; but a need came to be felt for systematic training of doctors, especially when government medical schools were in existence and governments began to insist on certain academic standards for medical practitioners. Consequently Christian medical schools were formed in certain centres, to which students were sent by various Missions, where the courses of study led to government examinations. The first effort in this direction was the Agra Medical Mission Training Institute, begun in 1881 by Dr Valentine of the United Presbyterian Mission. This was something in the nature of a Christian hostel attached to the Government School of Medicine; the students attended the Government School, but also had supplementary classes, both medical and other, at the Institute. A more ambitious project was the North India School of Medicine for Christian Women, founded at Ludhiana by Dr Edith Brown and Miss Greenfield in 1894, a fully fledged medical school for women doctors, compounders and nurses, which became affiliated to the Punjab University. In the Deccan a Christian medical school was established at Miraj under Dr (afterwards Sir) William Wanless, which for nearly fifty years was the principal training school for men. In South India a medical school for women was founded at Vellore (west of Madras) under Dr Ida S. Scudder of the American Arcot Mission. This soon became a union institution, ten other missions co-operating with the Arcot Mission.

[1] Richter, p. 352.

All these training institutions were 'medical schools' training assistant doctors of licentiate grade. But there came a time when governments began to withdraw recognition of this grade, thus facing the Christian institutions with the alternatives of 'upgrading' themselves,—at great expense,—into colleges teaching up to the M.B. and B.S. degrees, or else closing. Since the Government of Madras was the first to take this action, Vellore, the youngest of the medical schools, was the first to be affected. It undertook to 'upgrade' itself into a college, becoming affiliated to Madras University for the first two years of the M.B. course in 1942. Meanwhile the project of a Christian medical college for men had been under discussion for a dozen years. It was in the end decided to combine men's and women's training at Vellore. With the co-operation of all the major missionary societies and generous help from America and Europe as well as subscriptions raised in India, and the untiring advocacy of Dr Ida S. Scudder, the Christian Medical College became fully established in 1945. It is said to be the biggest single Christian medical enterprise in Asia. As a result of this development the Miraj school came to an end. More recently Ludhiana too has become a college training both men and women. These are the two colleges on which the Christian medical enterprise now chiefly depends for its Indian doctors, and the doctors trained in them are fully qualified men and women.

In the training of nurses and in the department of nursing generally Christian missions have made one of their most distinctive contributions to India. In the early days, when nursing was universally regarded as menial work and the only candidates who could be got were uneducated girls and widows, the work began under great difficulties; but since then much progress has been made. About eighty hospitals now have training classes, and the courses are prescribed and examined by examining boards in North and South India, which are recognized by the State governments. For many years Anglo-Indians and Indian Christians provided almost all candidates for the entire nursing profession in India, other communities being unwilling to let their girls enter it. As late as the beginning of the Second World War it was estimated that about ninety per cent of all the nurses in the country, male and female, were Christians, and that about eighty per cent of these had been trained in mission hospitals.[1]

[1] *Tales from the Inns of Healing*, p. 144.

Since then the other communities have been shedding their prejudices, so that the percentage has decreased, and it may be expected to decrease still further; but it will always remain true that Christian medical missions led the way in this important matter, and at present, at any rate, it still seems to be the fact that Christian hospitals usually make better provision for nursing their patients than government hospitals.

Special lines of work which medical missions developed were work for women and children, surgery and the treatment of eye diseases. At least up to 1932 hospitals staffed by women (134) out-numbered those staffed by men (112).[1] They were found all over India, as it then was, but were most numerous in the north, where the custom of purdah was in force. Since then however the tendency has been to add men's departments to women's hospitals, especially to those that have training classes, since modern regulations require nurses to be trained to nurse both men and women. Neyyoor, Vellore, Miraj, Ludhiana and many other hospitals became well known for their surgery; some, such as Bamdah (Bihar), Jalalpur-Jattan and Mungeli (M.P.), earned a great reputation for eye operations and other eye work. But perhaps the most conspicuous medical fields in which Christian missions have been foremost are tuberculosis and leprosy.

The premier tuberculosis sanatorium in India is a Christian institution: the Union Mission Tuberculosis Sanatorium, Arogyavaram (near the southern border of Andhra Pradesh). Founded in 1915 as a co-operative venture shared by fourteen missions, it rapidly achieved a leading position both in treatment and research. In its first superintendent, Dr C. Frimodt-Moeller of the Danish Mission, and his successor Dr P. V. Benjamin, it has provided the Government of India with advisers on tuberculosis. Besides Arogyavaram there are now eleven other sanatoria in different parts of India.

Ever since William Carey among his other activities was instrumental in founding an asylum for lepers in Calcutta, the care of those suffering from leprosy has been a special field of Christian service. At first it was a question of providing a refuge for advanced cases, where the patients might be housed and fed and made a little more comfortable. Many such leper homes were founded in the nineteenth century, some of them

[1] *The Ministry of Healing in India*, pp. 45 f.

by individuals (missionaries or others) moved to compassion by the plight of the lepers, others by missions as such. Quite often the founders were not medical men. One such was Wellesley Bailey, a layman who had come out to India intending to join the police, but had become a missionary with the American Presbyterians at Ambala instead, and had become interested in the inmates of the local leper asylum. It was through his pleading during a furlough in Ireland in 1874 that three maiden ladies in Dublin began to collect money for the relief of lepers in India. This was the beginning of the Mission to Lepers, an international and interdenominational society entirely devoted to providing and maintaining homes for sufferers from this disease. It enjoyed an extraordinary popularity, and quickly became an organization big enough to demand Bailey's full-time service as general secretary. Most of the leper settlements in India are maintained either under its own auspices or with the help of its grants-in-aid. At the present time it has 26 institutions of its own in this country and assists some 34 other homes and clinics. It also works in other countries. The larger settlements, such as Purulia (West Bengal) and Dichpalli (Andhra Pradesh), besides providing food, shelter and medical attention, have large farms and dairies worked by the patients and carry out well organized programmes of occupational therapy and educational and social activities. The Research and Training Centre of the Mission to Lepers at Karigiri, near Vellore, is making an increasing contribution to the anti-leprosy campaign.

Among the new discoveries of medical science in the twentieth century have been some drugs which, if regularly administered for a sufficient length of time, will check and in favourable cases cure leprosy. Hence leprosy work is no longer only a matter of relief; the settlements have also become centres of treatment. Moreover a growing number of patients is receiving treatment as out-patients, sometimes at hospitals, sometimes at clinics, whether in cities or at remote places in the country. Furthermore deformities are being dealt with by physiotherapy and reconstructive surgery, so that many patients are having use restored to their hands and feet. In all this work Christian missions have played, and still play, a leading part.[1]

A recent development since the Second World War has been

[1] This section is mainly based on information kindly communicated by W. Bailey Esq., M.A., secretary for India of the Mission to Lepers.

the initiation of Christian institutions for the treatment of mental illness, the need for which had long been felt. Psychiatric clinics at Lucknow, Miraj and Vellore have made a beginning in this work.

A Medical Missionary Association, formed in 1905 to bring together medical missionaries from all parts of the country for common counsel, blossomed in 1926 into the Christian Medical Association of India, whose membership is open to all Christian medical practitioners, whether in Church or mission service or not, who hold a recognized qualification and are in sympathy with its aims. It acts as the medical committee of the National Christian Council.[1] From 1925 to 1927 the Association carried out a valuable survey of medical missions, the results of which were published in 1929 and formed the basis of the handbook *The Ministry of Healing in India* (1932). The C.M.A.I. is the central consultative and advisory body for the Christian medical enterprise in this country. By its journal, its conferences and the activities of its staff of secretaries it disseminates information and ideas, and provides a forum where the issues of the day may be discussed and policy defined. It also sponsors various forms of medical education. Since 1931 it has had a Nurses' Auxiliary. The point of view advocated by the C.M.A.I. is that the ministry of healing is not a mere adjunct of mission work, adopted perhaps as an aid to conversion, but itself an essential part of the work of the Christian Church. Just as the earthly ministry of our Lord included the healing of sick people, so the care of the sick is part of the ministry he committed to the Church. It is one of the ways in which the Christian *dharma* expresses itself.

In recent years government medical services have been developing and increasing rapidly. The five year plans of the Government of India include a large expenditure on public health. Yet the Christian hospitals have maintained their popularity and their distinctive character. People have recognized that the care of the sick involves more than buildings and equipment and technical knowledge; it is also a matter of personal relations and personal service. Here the Christian institution, if it is at all worthy of the name, has something to offer which a secular institution is not likely to have. Moreover the Christian ministry to the sick is not confined to Christian hos-

[1] On the National Christian Council see below, pp. 229 f.

pitals. There is a great number of Christians in government and municipal services and in private practice, who, if they retain their Christian loyalty and sense of vocation, have abundant opportunities to commend the Gospel by the quality of their service. Through them as well as the workers in Christian institutions the Church is in touch with the non-Christian world in a very practical way.

Some other types of Christian work may be mentioned more briefly. We have already referred occasionally to the writing of books and the translation of the Bible. Writing requires publication. Accordingly we find that printing presses have been a common feature of modern missions. In the first half of the nineteenth century almost every major station had a press of its own. Many of these presses served their purpose and were given up; but others founded then and later were larger institutions which continue to this day. Such are the Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta (1818), the Basel Mission Press, Mangalore (1841), the (Methodist) Lucknow Publishing House (1861) and the Wesley Press, Mysore (1890). Nor was the writing of books left solely to the initiative of individuals in the local missions. Tract and Book Societies were formed in Madras (1818), Calcutta (1823), Bombay (1827), Allahabad (1827), Bangalore (1855) and other centres, as publishing and distributing agencies.[1] Some of these still continue, though under different management. Of other societies in this field the chief is the Christian Literature Society for India, of Madras, founded originally as the Vernacular Education Society in 1858 and directed during the first forty-six years of its life by the able and energetic Dr John Murdoch. The S.P.C.K. after handing over its missions concentrated on the publication of books. From 1811 onwards auxiliaries of the British and Foreign Bible Society were organized in India. These took up the work of preparing, publishing and distributing the Bible and portions of it in a great many languages. They sponsored the revision of existing translations in Indian languages and the making of many new ones, and have rendered most valuable help to the Protestant Churches by providing abundant supplies of the Scriptures at moderate prices. The auxiliaries are now attached to the Bible Society of India and Ceylon, an

[1] Richter, p. 295.

organization set up in 1944. This is connected with the parent society; but it enjoys a large measure of autonomy.

Another type of work is seen in the industrial and agricultural projects. Quite early in the nineteenth century missionaries' wives, such as Mrs Mault in Travancore, began teaching the Christian girls in their boarding homes lace-making, sewing or embroidery. The Basel Mission on the west coast became well known for its tile-making and textile industries, now under the management of the Commonwealth Trust. Other missions introduced carpentry, furniture-making and other crafts. The furniture of Nazareth, Katpadi and Tumkur; the woven fabrics of Ikkadu; the lace and embroidery of Travancore and Dummagudem, became well known. The motive usually was to provide economically backward communities with a means of livelihood and also to train character by craftsmanship. Some of the industries became fairly large concerns employing a considerable number of people and able to provide substantial sums for mission funds; others remained on a modest scale. The caste system and limited demand for the products tended to hinder men trained in mission industries from setting up on their own and making a living as independent craftsmen, though a certain number were able to do so.

In agricultural and stock-farming projects, such as the American Arcot Mission's Agricultural Institute at Katpadi (Madras State) and the Slater Poultry Farm of the American Presbyterian Mission at Etah (U.P.), efforts have been made to improve the economic state of the local community, Christian and non-Christian, by teaching scientific methods and introducing superior varieties of seeds and superior breeds of animals and poultry. Etah has also a Christian Agricultural Inter College under the auspices of the United Church of Northern India. A major institution of this type is the Allahabad Agricultural Institute, founded in 1910 by Sam Higginbottom as a department of the Ewing Christian College. Since 1932 it has been associated with the University of Allahabad. This Institute provides courses for men up to the B.Sc. degree in Agriculture and Agricultural Engineering, and for women up to the B.Sc. degree with Home Science and Home Economics. Students are also prepared for the Indian Dairy Diploma of the Government of India. Besides class rooms and laboratories for the academic side of the work there is an extensive farm of 600 acres devoted to cultivation of various kinds, fruit-growing, dairy- and stock-

farming and the rearing of poultry. Half a dozen Missions and Churches co-operate in the running of the Institute, and it has had the benefit of grants from the Rockefeller Foundation and other such organizations in America. Founded in the belief that the basis of the country's economy is its agriculture, the Institute aims at training students who, as farmers of their own lands or as farm managers, teachers, research workers or administrators, will help rural India to a happier life through the better use and development of its land and livestock.

The economic backwardness of large sections of the Christian community,—not to mention the country as a whole,—is so great that the industrial and agricultural missions cannot deal with more than a fraction of it; but within their limits they have done excellent work, and they have borne eloquent witness to the truth that the Gospel concerns the whole life of man.

Chapter XIII

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN INDIA SINCE 1800

As in Protestantism so also in the Roman Church there is a modern missionary movement dating from the nineteenth century. In India its beginning may be dated from about 1830, and it is separated from the earlier movement by a period of about seventy years during which Roman missions fell into a state of decay. Roman Catholic historians refer to this as a dark age of decadence which reached its lowest point in the early years of the nineteenth century. The reasons for this decline are not far to seek. In the first place the power of Portugal had dwindled. In the heyday of Portuguese influence in India missions had been under the patronage of the king, and had been carried on with the active help of the government. But by the end of the eighteenth century little of that spirit remained. Portugal retained an interest in ecclesiastical affairs in India, but the time was long past when it undertook an active policy of christianization; and indeed there was little scope for it in the changed political conditions. Furthermore the most active missionaries had been the Jesuits; but most of them, as we saw in chapter VII, had been removed from the scene by reason of the expulsion of their Society from Portugal and its colonies in 1759 and its suppression by the Pope in 1773. Of those who were able to remain only three survived into the nineteenth century.[1] The Paris Society for Foreign Missions, which tried to come to the rescue, which some of the survivors joined, was soon involved in the crisis of the French Revolution, and for some years after that was not able to do much to develop its work. The Christians in some of the most populous areas (South Kanara in particular) had been scattered by war and persecution in the time of Tippoo Sultan. Some had lapsed during the troubles over the Malabar rites; some, in the districts where the Tranquebar Mission was at work, had become Protestants. For all these reasons the community had suffered heavy losses, and the missions were in decay.

[1] J. C. Houpert: *A South Indian Mission*, p. 65. On the ex-Jesuits see D. Ferroli: *The Jesuits in Malabar*, Vol. II, Part III, Chapter 4.

The ecclesiastical organization remaining from earlier days consisted of the old Portuguese dioceses, supplemented by certain vicariates apostolic created during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by the Propaganda.[1] The dioceses were the archdiocese of Goa with its suffragan dioceses of Cochin and Mylapore;[2] to which may be added the old Jesuit archdiocese of Cranganore (or Angamali), now little more than a name. Cochin included Ceylon and southern Tamilnad as well as the coast of Kerala; Mylapore stretched from northern Tamilnad to Orissa and Bengal; the rest of India had originally been vaguely included with Goa, whose actual operations however were now confined in practice to Portuguese India and parishes of Goan origin in the parts adjoining. The vicariates surviving were those of Malabar or Verapoli (mostly concerned with the Syrian Catholics), Bombay (formerly called the vicariate of Bijapur or the Great Mogul, because its field had been the southern portion of the Mogul Empire) and Patna (or the Tibet-Hindustan Mission, concerned with North India). The clergy in these vicariates belonged to the religious Orders (Carmelite in Verapoli and Bombay, Capuchin in North India) and were non-Portuguese. Besides these old vicariates there was a more recent one set up at Pondicherry (1776) to take care of the Paris Society's mission. The dioceses were under the Portuguese padroado and were the original organization; the vicariates had been added later to supplement them, and they were under the Pope directly. The relations between the two had never been precisely defined. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the vicariates were very inadequately staffed. In the dioceses the staff was numerous, but clerical standards tended to be low. Very little work among non-Christians was being done.

The man who set the modern missionary movement going in India was Pope Gregory XVI, who before he became Pope in 1831 had been Prefect of Propaganda. His policy was to set up vicariates apostolic in non-Portuguese territories as a framework within which missions could come and work; for it was clear that Portugal could not extend its responsibilities. At that very time all the padroado sees were vacant, and Portugal

[1] To understand the position and the subsequent developments the reader is recommended to consult the excellent maps at the beginning of E. R. Hull's *Bombay Mission History*, Vol. I, maps nos. VI and VII and the notes given with them.

[2] The diocese of Mylapore dates from 1606.

itself was torn by civil war. An appeal from the Pope to the Portuguese court either to fulfil its obligations by nominating bishops or else give up its right of patronage fell upon deaf ears, and, when the victorious party in the civil war entered on a course of anti-Church legislation and broke off diplomatic relations with Rome (1833), further negotiations became impossible for the time being. Meanwhile the Pope had begun to set up new vicariates. The vicariate of Madras, covering a great area from Madras to Hyderabad, Nagpur and the border of Orissa, was erected in 1832. Another of Calcutta (for Bengal) was erected in 1834. In 1836 the mission vicariate of Pondicherry was made into a fully fledged vicariate of the Coromandel Coast, covering most of Tamilnad and Mysore. The effect was that by means of these new vicariates apostolic and the old ones already existing in North and Western India and Kerala a rudimentary ecclesiastical organization was set up all over non-Portuguese India, including parts of the country where padroado dioceses existed. This was most unwelcome to the Goan clergy, devoted as they were to the Portuguese connexion. Those in the areas covered by the vicariates, though they had at the time no bishops of their own, refused to acknowledge or co-operate with the vicars apostolic, and in this they were supported by the authorities at Goa. Moreover in 1836 the Portuguese Government sent out bishops-elect for Goa, Cochin and Mylapore. They did not submit their names to Rome, and therefore the men could not receive episcopal consecration; but they came out to India and undertook the administration of the dioceses.

The Pope's reply to this was intended to be drastic. By the Brief *Multa Praeclare*, published in 1838, he declared the sees of Cochin, Cranganore and Mylapore suspended until the Holy See should decide otherwise, and all jurisdiction in them committed solely to the vicars apostolic of those areas, whom all must obey. But the only effect was to incense the Goans still further, and provoke an open conflict, sometimes called the Goan Schism. Supported by Portugal, they utterly denied the Pope's right to abrogate the Portuguese padroado in the three dioceses, and therefore rejected his order, and actively resisted all attempts of the vicars apostolic and their clergy to exercise authority in places that belonged, or had formerly belonged, to the padroado, sometimes even offering actual violence. Thus one of the first results of Pope Gregory XVI's attempt to revive Roman Catholic missions was a violent quarrel

over jurisdiction between the adherents of the padroado and those of the Propaganda. The dispute which had been smouldering ever since the first appointment of a vicar apostolic in the seventeenth century, and had helped to inflame the rites controversy in the eighteenth, now flared up into a blaze, to vex the Church for a great part of the nineteenth. But on the other hand new missions were arriving meanwhile and beginning their work. They were the fruits of a renewal of missionary zeal in the Catholic countries of Europe.[1]

Prominent among the new arrivals were the Jesuits;—for the Society of Jesus was restored by Pope Pius VII in 1814. In 1838 French Jesuits, sent at the request of the French vicar apostolic of Pondicherry, began to reoccupy the territory south of the river Cauvery where the old Madura Mission of their Society had worked. They found a long-neglected and degenerate community. In places where there were Goan priests in charge of churches their coming was resented as an intrusion, and possession of the churches was disputed, as at Madura itself. Nevertheless they persevered and gradually built up a many-sided work. Madura became a vicariate apostolic in 1847, for such was the policy as the missions prospered. The new Jesuit missionaries did not follow the methods of de Nobili, and it is interesting to note also that in the padroado dispute they were now on the opposite side to that taken by their predecessors, who had been helped by padroado bishops to resist the decree of the Pope's legate. In Bengal the English, Irish and French Jesuits who started work in 1834 were succeeded in 1859 by Belgians. The Belgians worked in West Bengal and Orissa, and later moved over into Chota Nagpur also. In 1854 German Jesuits took over Bombay from the Carmelites and proceeded to develop missions in Gujerat and in Poona. Italian Jesuits came to Mangalore in 1877, again succeeding Carmelities.[2]

Meanwhile the older Capuchin missions in North India continued, until they spread over a wide area from Bihar to the Punjab. One of their chief centres in the East India Company days was Sardhana, near Meerut. It was in a small principality which had been granted to a European adventurer in the eighteenth century by the Moguls of Delhi for the support of his army of

[1] On this see J. Schmidlin: *Catholic Mission History*, pp. 556-582.

[2] On the various missions see K. S. Latourette: *History of the Expansion of Christianity*, VI, pp. 79 ff; Schmidlin, *op. cit.*, pp. 598 ff.

mercenaries. After his death the Muslim lady whom he had married decided to become a Christian, and from her baptism in 1781 until her death in 1836 the Begum Samru was a patroness of Christians. Many of her subjects became Christians, and Sardhana became the home of a settled Roman Catholic community, and even for a short time the seat of a vicar apostolic. After an adventurous life she devoted herself in her later years to works of piety and almsgiving, building churches at her own expense and making liberal donations of money to the Roman Church and also to the Anglican and to Hindu and Muslim institutions.[1] Agra became a vicariate of the Capuchins in 1820, where a community estimated at 6000 in 1838 is said to have increased to 23,000 in 1856; but heavy losses were suffered in the Mutiny.[2] Another centre was Patna, whose first vicar apostolic, Anastasius Hartmann, was one of the leading figures of the Roman Church in India in his day, a zealous pastor and administrator. After serving in Patna for four years he was called to Bombay in 1850, where he became the protagonist on the side of the Propaganda in the turbulent disputes arising out of the padroado question.[3] Between 1856 and 1860 he was absent in Europe, occupied with negotiations with Church authorities and with the British Government about Roman Catholic missions in India. During the last two years of this time he was director of all the foreign missions of the Capuchin Order and Rector of their training college. Returning to India in 1860 to take charge for the second time of the vicariate of Patna, to which Allahabad and Lucknow had meanwhile been added, he worked there until his death from cholera in 1866.[4] The work of the Capuchin missions included chaplaincies to Roman Catholic soldiers and the care of churches in the military stations of North India.

In the South the Paris Society based on Pondicherry extended its work in that region and in Mysore, Coimbatore and Kumbakonam. The Madras vicariate, as at first constituted, covered a vast area from Madras northwards to Vizagapatam, Hyderabad and Nagpur. It was presided over by vicars apostolic of various

[1] For a popular account of Begum Zebunissa Joanna Samru see P. Thomas: *Christians and Christianity in India and Pakistan*, Chap. VIII.

[2] Schmidlin, p. 600.

[3] E. R. Hull: *Bombay Mission History*, I, pp. 399 ff.

[4] For a popular life of Bishop Hartmann see *Hartmann the Crusader* (St. Paul Publications, Allahabad-Bombay).

Orders and some seculars, the chief personalities being two Irishmen, John Fenelly (1842-1868) and his brother Stephen Fenelly, who succeeded him. It was the latter who brought in the English missionary Society of St Joseph, Mill Hill, which took up work in the Telugu districts immediately north of Madras in 1875, and shared in the great mass movement of the depressed classes that took place throughout that region as a result of the famine of 1876-1878. The more distant areas were occupied by other missions,—Vizagapatam and Nagpur by the Salesians of Annecy, Hyderabad by Italians of the Milan Society for Foreign Missions—,and in time became separate vicariates. Among the Telugu-speaking population in the latter and among the Khonds, an aboriginal people, in the former large numbers were baptized.

As time passed, many other Orders and Societies from several European countries joined in the work; it would be tedious to go on listing the names. But we must not omit to notice that among them were women's Orders, another feature that distinguishes the modern missions from the earlier ones which were entirely staffed by men. As among the Protestants, so also among the Roman Catholics women's work for women and girls played an important part in the building up of the Church in modern times.

Meanwhile the dispute between the Goan (or padroado) clergy and the vicars apostolic of the Propaganda was going on vigorously. From being a contention of ecclesiastics it had spread to the laity, and in places such as the Fishery Coast and Bombay it had led to tumults, police action and court cases. The Propagandists held that the Padroadists had been deprived of jurisdiction by the Pope, that they were rebels in a state of schism and that their ministrations were invalid. The Padroadists refuted the charge of schism, arguing that papal briefs had no force in India unless they were approved by the King of Portugal, and held that they were only defending their legitimate rights, which the vicars apostolic were invading. They were fighting for the retention of the Portuguese padroado in British India. This was the attitude of the Government of Portugal too. Consequently, after diplomatic relations had been restored (1841), the Portuguese Government took up with Rome the question of the obnoxious *Multa Praeclare*. Long and difficult negotiations followed, which eventually issued in a Concordat signed in 1857, but finally ratified only in 1860,

in which the Pope,—on paper at any rate—, made large concessions. The suspended sees of Cochin, Cranganore and Mylapore were to be restored, but only after new boundaries had first been fixed for them by special commissioners; meanwhile the Archbishop of Goa was to have extraordinary jurisdiction over Goan churches within the former boundaries. Portugal was also to have the right to found new padroado dioceses elsewhere. Whenever boundaries were defined and bishops appointed in the suspended sees or in any new ones, the vicars apostolic were to retire from those areas; otherwise they would remain. Theoretically the way was open to the Portuguese to reassert the padroado by founding new dioceses all over India; but actually it was quite beyond their ability to provide for even one new one. Moreover the attempt to fix new boundaries for the three suspended sees broke down, so that even they were not restored. In fact most of the Concordat became a dead letter. The practical result was that each party continued to administer the churches of which it had actual possession, and the position of the Goan clergy in the vicariates was regularized by their receiving jurisdiction from a newly appointed Archbishop of Goa in 1862,—which from the Propagandist point of view ended the schism.

Fresh negotiations produced another Concordat in 1886. This followed the principle of recognizing the ancient rights of Portugal, but defining their extent as clearly as might be, in accordance with the existing situation. (The time had not yet come when it could be said simply that the padroado should apply to Portuguese territories only.) Thus the Archbishop of Goa was to be styled Patriarch of the East Indies and to have the right of presiding at national councils. The archdiocese of Goa was to consist of the sees of Goa, Cochin, Mylapore and a new one of Damaun (the northern portion of the former diocese of Goa), whose bishop was also to have the honorary title Archbishop of Cranganore.[1] The boundaries of these dioceses were fixed, those of the suffragan sees being greatly reduced so as to embrace specific (though not necessarily continuous) areas and some scattered Goan churches.[2] The King of Por-

[1] The see of Cranganore itself was extinguished.

[2] For example, Mylapore was to consist of Mylapore itself, an area in the region of Tanjore, fourteen churches in the vicariate of Madura and eight in Bengal. Five others in Madras city were afterwards added.

tugal, besides presenting bishops to the padroado dioceses, was to have the right of choosing bishops for four Propaganda dioceses to be set up (Bombay, Mangalore, Quilon and Madura), the choice to be made from a list submitted by the Propaganda bishops in India through the Archbishop of Goa. In all other parts of India the Pope was to be free to appoint bishops and erect dioceses. Thus the spheres of padroado and Propaganda were clearly distinguished and agreed.

This having been settled, Pope Leo XIII proceeded to establish the hierarchy in India on a regular footing. Later in the same year (1886) all the vicariates were raised to the rank of dioceses, and six of them (Agra, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Pondicherry and Verapoli) were made archdioceses, forming with the archdiocese of Goa seven ecclesiastical provinces. These arrangements were inaugurated in India in 1887 by the Apostolic Delegate, Cardinal Agliardi, and thus the modern Roman Catholic organization came into being. Many new dioceses and archdioceses have been erected since then. In 1958 there were fifteen archdioceses and forty-seven dioceses.[1]

Throughout the controversy the most potent cause of local friction had been what is called double jurisdiction, that is in one and the same place churches under different bishops. Though efforts had been made in the Concordat of 1886 to avoid this, some situations of this kind remained to cause trouble. There were, for example, six churches in the archdiocese of Bombay belonging to the Bishop of Damaun and seven in Damaun belonging to Bombay, and on the Fishery Coast fourteen churches belonging to Mylapore; hence occasions of friction were not lacking. Some adjustments were made in 1890 to deal with discontents arising out of the Concordat. In 1928 however a new agreement made between Rome and the Republic of Portugal abolished double jurisdiction almost everywhere by exchange of churches between dioceses. Along with the exchange it was provided that the priests ministering in Goan parishes should be Goans, and in Bombay that the archbishop be alternately a Portuguese subject and a British subject. The same agreement also modified the procedure for appointing bishops in dioceses where Portugal was concerned. In the padroado sees the Pope was to nominate a Portuguese candidate to the President of Portugal, and the President was to present this candidate officially to the Pope,

[1] T. Pothacamury: *The Church in Independent India*, p. 31.

unless there were any political objection; in the other four sees the Pope was to name his candidate to the President, who was to present him to the Pope within one month.[1]

Finally in 1950 in view of Indian independence there was another agreement between Rome and Portugal, whereby Portugal renounced what remained of her padroado rights in dioceses within the Indian Union, and undertook to consider a revision of the boundaries of the archdiocese of Goa accordingly. The last act of revision was in 1953, when Karwar, Belgaum, Savantvadi and Ratnagiri were excluded from Goa and divided between the diocese of Poona and a newly erected diocese of Belgaum.[2] Thus at long last this troublesome question was ended.

Meanwhile during the last quarter of the nineteenth century the Roman Catholic missions increased and consolidated themselves. There were some conversions among the higher castes, for example three Brahmins (M. S. Balachandra Ayer, P. J. Doraiswamy Ayer and V. Mahadeva Ayer) at Trichinopoly in 1894;[3] but the great majority came from the Sudras and scheduled castes and from aboriginal tribes. Chota Nagpur, where, as we have seen, the Lutherans of Gossner's Mission made very many converts among the Mundas and Oraons, afterwards became a very fruitful field for the Roman Catholics also. The Belgian Jesuits, who came to Chota Nagpur from Bengal in 1877, were able to take advantage of the unrest among the Kols which led to a large secession from the Lutheran ranks from 1887. Thousands of them with their catechists joined the Jesuit Mission, giving a vivid illustration of that tendency for the discontented of one Christian body to hive off and join another which our present disunity encourages. This mass movement is especially associated with the name of Fr. Constant Lievens, who during the six or seven years he was in India (1885-1892) showed himself a zealous and effective champion of these people in their quarrels and lawsuits with zemindars and moneylenders. Besides baptizing large numbers of them

[1] For a full account of the padroado question, which tries to do justice to both sides, see E. R. Hull, S. J., *Bombay Mission History*, Vols. I and II.

[2] I take these last two items of information from newspaper reports: the first from an article in the *Madras Mail* of 17 April 1951 on the diocese of Mylapore, the second from a news item in the same paper on 7 October 1953.

[3] J. C. Houpert: *A South Indian Mission*, p. 78.

Fr. Lievens founded for their economic improvement a Mutual Help Society and a Co-operative Credit Society. Nor was the movement only an affair of seceded Lutherans; it continued among the non-Christian Kols in the following years and resulted in a very large Roman Catholic community, for whom the Mission introduced co-operative stores, rice banks, produce banks, industrial schools, cottage industries and improved methods of agriculture. In 1927, when the diocese of Ranchi was established in that area, the community numbered 190,000.[1] It is now well over 300,000.[2] In South Kanara several thousands of the depressed classes became Christians through the ministrations of Fr. Faustin Corti, S. J., who turned to them in 1910 after five years of fruitless work among Brahmins and Jains, living in Indian style and walking from village to village barefoot.[3] On the other side of South India too there were mass movements, as among the Protestants, in the Andhra and Tamil districts.

Modern Roman Catholic missions have taken part in educational work at all levels from nursery schools to colleges, and their institutions receive government grants in the same way as other aided schools and colleges. The great aim of educational policy has been to train up the rising generation of Christians, and also to impart good principles to non-Christians. Boarding homes, hostels for Christians and non-Christians, and orphanages play an important part. There are also technical schools, such as St Joseph's Industrial School, Trichinopoly, which teaches electro-plating, carpentry, foundry and mechanical sawing and has also a printing establishment.[4] Two departments of education may be singled out as specially characteristic. One is higher education, a field in which the Jesuits have been eminent throughout India. Notable examples of their work are to be seen in St Joseph's College, Trichinopoly, Loyola College, Madras, St Xavier's College, Bombay and St Xavier's College, Calcutta. The other is the convent schools for girls which are to be found in most of the principal towns and in many smaller places too.

Medical work has not been neglected, though perhaps major medical institutions are less conspicuous than in Protestant

[1] Latourette, VI, p. 95; Schmidlin, p. 599.

[2] T. Pothacamury: *The Church in Independent India* (1958), p. 76.

[3] Latourette, VI, p. 90.

[4] Houpert, *op. cit.*, p. 213.

missions. Roman Catholic hospitals and dispensaries have been largely staffed by various women's Orders. In days when the government nursing services were less developed than they are now nuns were to be found nursing in civil hospitals also. They have indeed busied themselves with a great variety of useful activities, some of which may be indicated by the following description of convent settlements in South India:

> Enter the compound of a convent, and you find there the residence of the nuns, a training-house for novices, a neat chapel, halls where orphan girls do needle or lace work, perhaps a weaving establishment, further on a thatched, mud-wall structure, the refuge for old, helpless men and women, a foundlings' home, and sheds or verandahs for pounding rice, making altar bread, rolling wax candles and doing other useful works. The outside world is not forgotten: here is a catechumenate for neophytes to learn their prayers; there a school open to all, and a dispensary besieged by crowds.[1]

In view of previous history it is natural to inquire how modern Roman Catholic missions have dealt with caste. Opinions and practices have varied. In some areas there was no recognition of caste in the Church, though the non-Christians regarded all the Christians together as a caste; but in the old areas of the South it was not found possible to escape from the early precedents. Differences of social status and habits were recognized more or less openly. Thus we find at Trichinopoly St Mary's Tope, a colony of Catholic Brahmins, founded in 1895, where Christian families may live and keep up their former social customs,[2] and on the west coast the fisher Christians and the Roman Catholic Syrians continued to be quite distinct social groups. It was customary until late in the nineteenth century to have some kind of barrier in churches marking off the portion to be occupied by the depressed classes; but subsequently this was given up. The development in this respect is neatly described by Fr. Houpert thus:

> St Francis Xavier on the Fishery Coast and the Synod of Diamper allowed different churches. In the 17th century Fr. de Nobili allowed in the same building different places with a low wall of separation. In the 19th century rails

[1] Houpert, *op. cit.*, p. 213. [2] *ibid.*, p. 211.

> three feet high were deemed enough and in the 20th century our churches have no separate places or at least no places railed off. In other words that sorry importation from Hinduism, untouchability, slowly sinks into the grave at least within the houses of God, if not in those of men.[1]

The slow process was sometimes hastened by expressions of feeling by the people concerned, as in a case quoted by Latourette from the diocese of Pondicherry. A tumult having been raised when a new church, opened early in the twentieth century, was found to have the partition, the church was closed for a time and then reopened without it.[2] On the other hand in 1916 a case in which the Sudra Christians claimed a separate place in church as a customary right, despite its refusal by the ecclesiastical authorities, went up to the Madras High Court, which upheld the refusal.[3] For many years a low caste origin was in practice, though not in theory, a disqualification for the priesthood. In general the Roman Catholic Church has abstained from attacking the caste system directly, and has tended to recognize caste in its social aspect as an inevitable feature of Indian life and therefore to allow for a caste-wise stratification in its Christian community, though it has attempted by its teaching to mitigate the caste spirit and has condemned its more extreme manifestations, such as untouchability, and has hoped for a gradual growth of unity.

A feature of Roman Catholic history in modern India, especially since 1886, has been the increasing number of Indian clergy and of seminaries for their training, and the increasing number of Indian bishops. In the Portuguese period there had been seminaries at Goa and in Malabar, maintained by the religious Orders, where Goans and Syrians had been trained for the priesthood. We read also of Brahmin Oratorians of Goa, who were Indian priests of Brahmin origin. Moreover there had been a few instances in the seventeenth century of Indians being raised to the episcopate as vicars apostolic; but early death or Portuguese opposition prevented the men from exercising their ministry successfully, except only the Syrian Parampil Chandy (Alexander de Campo). There was in India a prejudice against such appointments. The Jesuits in their missions in Tamilnad made abundant use of lay catechists, but never attempted to train an Indian priesthood. In the nineteenth century also this

[1] *ibid.*, p. 258. [2] Latourette, VI, p. 91. [3] Houpert, p. 258.

continued to be a typical pattern in the missions: foreign missionaries relying on lay catechists. Most of the Indian priests available were Goans, and at that period their quality was not high. But from the middle of the century the training of Indian clergy, regular and secular, began to be taken in hand in the various mission areas.

The importance attached to this work by Rome was conspicuously shown by Pope Leo XIII's decision in 1890 to found a papal seminary, worthy to rank with the best seminaries in Europe, to train secular priests for India and Ceylon. This institution was located first at Kandy in Ceylon (1893); in 1954 it was moved to Poona. About the same time as the papal seminary was founded the Jesuits established two central colleges for the training of members of their Society, one at Kurseong in the north of Bengal (1889), the other at Shembaganur in the Palni Hills of South India (1895). To these De Nobili College, Poona, was added shortly before the Second World War. Other seminaries of various grades have been founded in the present century. Indians have also been trained for the priesthood at the Propaganda College at Rome. The result has been an impressive increase in the number and competence of the Indian clergy. The first Indian diocesan bishop of the Latin rite, F. T. Roche, Bishop of Tuticorin, was consecrated in 1923, since when the number of Indian bishops, and latterly archbishops, has steadily risen. By 1958, when Archbishop Pothacamury's book *The Church in Independent India* was published, 12 out of 15 archbishops and 26 out of 47 diocesan bishops were Indians.[1] Some dioceses are now entirely staffed by Indians. In 1953 the Indian Archbishop of Bombay was created a Cardinal (His Eminence Valerian Cardinal Gracias).

We have already noted that it was during the modern missionary movement beginning in the nineteenth century that women's Orders first came to work in India. Following their example a great many religious congregations of Indian women have been founded. The Indian Sisters now number over 11,000.[2]

This chapter may conclude with a short account of the more recent history of the Roman section of the Syrian Christians, now called the Syro-Malabar Church, that is those who either did not share in the Coonen Cross revolt of 1653 or afterwards

[1] *op. cit.*, p. 81. [2] *ibid.*, p. 24.

returned to the Roman obedience.[1] We saw in chapter VI how Rome attempted to remove them from the jurisdiction of the Jesuit prelates of the padroado by placing them under a Carmelite vicar apostolic (Bishop Joseph Sebastiani), and how, on his being expelled from Malabar when the Dutch captured Cochin, the Indian Parampil Chandy (Alexander de Campo) was consecrated to succeed him. It was intended that his successor too should be an Indian; but in fact this was never brought about. Two hundred years were to elapse before the community again had a bishop of its own race. Meanwhile it was ruled by European vicars apostolic, most of them Carmelites,[2] against whom discontent sometimes arose as it had done against the Jesuits in the seventeenth century. Once it seemed as if an Indian bishop was to be given to it. A Syrian Christian called Joseph Cariatil, who had spent some years in Europe, was nominated by the Queen of Portugal to the see of Cranganore. Unfortunately he died soon after reaching India (1786). The Syrians being excited by rumours of foul play, the Archbishop of Goa thought it wise to placate them by appointing another Syrian, Thomas Paremmakal, as administrator of the diocese. They petitioned that he should be nominated to the vacant see. When this was not granted, an attempt was made to get a bishop consecrated by the Chaldean Patriarch, for the memory of the old organization still tended to revive when there was friction between the Syrians and the Carmelite missionaries. It seems that someone was actually consecrated and sent to India, but was prevented from functioning; so that the attempt proved abortive. Meanwhile a reconciliation between the people and the missionaries was brought about by the help of the Rajah of Travancore, and in the following years the invasion of Tippoo gave everybody other things to think about.

In the nineteenth century measures began to be taken to build up again the church life of Christians, which had suffered during the disorders and stagnation of the preceding years. A development that was to prove most fruitful was the founding of a branch of the Carmelite Order among the Syrians themselves.

[1] In this section I have followed Cardinal Tisserant's *Eastern Christianity in India*, pp. 94-139 and 157-162.

[2] The Dutch prohibition of European Roman Catholic missionaries in Malabar was relaxed in 1698 as the result of a diplomatic agreement in Europe. Thenceforward Belgian, German and Italian Carmelites in limited numbers were allowed. Tisserant, p. 89.

Eleven priests who had come together in 1831 to lead a religious life took their first vows in 1855 under the guidance of the Carmelite vicar apostolic, Bernardine of St Teresa (Joseph Baccinelli), under the name Servants of Mary Immaculate of Mount Carmel. In 1860 they became a regular Third Order of the Discalced Carmelites (T.O.C.D.). Their constitutions were approved by the Pope for six years in 1885; in 1890 they became autonomous; and in 1906 the Order was finally approved. These Indian Tertiaries became, as Cardinal Tisserant puts it, 'an elite in the Syro-Malabar communities'. Their numbers increased, until their work spread all over Malabar.

The same vicar apostolic (Baccinelli) who encouraged the starting of the Tertiaries also took steps to improve the quality of the secular clergy by setting up seminaries, where candidates for the priesthood might receive a more systematic training than they had hitherto received under the informal instruction of *malpans*. He closed some twenty informal schools, founded instead five regular seminaries, and announced that in future only candidates from those seminaries would be ordained. One of these institutions, that of Puthenpally, was made in 1886 the central seminary for all the Syrian Catholics and for the Latin clergy of the dioceses of Verapoli, Quilon and Mangalore. In 1933 it was moved to Alwaye. There is no doubt that this reform of Bishop Baccinelli's was of great benefit to the Church; but at the time it caused discontent in certain quarters which was one factor in the events we are about to describe.

Discontent in a section of the community led again to correspondence with Mesopotamia in the middle of the nineteenth century. The people desired to have a bishop of their own, who knew Syriac, and if they could not persuade Rome to provide them with one, they were prepared to try the Chaldean Patriarch. The Patriarch who was in office at that time seemed disposed to try to re-establish a connexion with Malabar in spite of the explicit disapproval of Rome. Consequently a Mesopotamian intruder, Mar Rokos, landed in India in 1861. Though some of the malcontents were willing to receive him, the vicar apostolic and the Tertiaries were able to rally the majority of the community against him. Pressure was also brought to bear on the Patriarch to recall him. Mar Rokos was excommunicated by the vicar apostolic and warned to leave Malabar, which he did in 1862. During his short stay however he had ordained some men of inadequate qualifications to the priesthood.

In the following decade the Patriarch made another attempt to assert himself against the Pope and use the discontents in Malabar to capture the allegiance of the Syro-Malabar community, which would give him the financial support of a much larger community than his own in Mesopotamia. Another Mesopotamian bishop, Mar Elias Mellus, came to India in 1874, settled at Trichur in North Kerala and called upon the community to withdraw from the jurisdiction of the vicar apostolic. This time the dissident movement had greater success. By 1877 about 24,000 had gone over to Mar Mellus; a second Mesopotamian bishop had arrived to assist him; and again there had been many ordinations. An attempt to deal with the situation by appointing an apostolic visitor to inquire into grievances broke down because the proposals suggested by the visitor were not acceptable to the vicar apostolic. Meanwhile the Patriarch had been suspended by the Pope, and eventually he submitted and recalled Mar Mellus. It was not until 1882 however that Mar Mellus reluctantly left India, leaving behind him a considerable following and two vicars with powers to bless Holy Oils and confer minor orders.

After the establishment of the hierarchy in India in 1886 special efforts were made to deal with the situation. In 1887 the Syrians in the new archdiocese of Verapoli were removed from Carmelite jurisdiction and grouped in two new vicariates. As there was still a prejudice against appointing Indian bishops, two European vicars apostolic were chosen, Bishop Lavigne, S. J. (Kottayam, later Changanacherry) and Bishop Medlycott (Trichur). These two men had the wisdom to appoint Syrian priests as their counsellors and to delegate large powers to them. There followed a period of transition during which the Church settled down again, schools were founded for the education of the community, and many of the dissidents were won over. By the time the two vicars apostolic left (Lavigne in 1895, Medlycott in 1896), the way had been prepared for Indian successors to be appointed. In 1896 the two vicariates were replaced by three, Changanacherry, Ernakulam and Trichur, and Indians from among the counsellors of Lavigne and Medlycott were placed in charge. A new development shortly afterwards was the creation of a new vicariate, Kottayam, especially consisting of Christians who were Southists.

The Mellusian party dwindled, but did not become extinct. In 1907-1908 they joined the Nestorian Church and received

a Nestorian bishop from Mesopotamia. Their centre is Trichur, and they are said to number about 5000. Thus the Nestorian Church has again made its appearance in modern India.

At last in 1923, when Pope Pius XI created an ecclesiastical province of the Syrian Christians, the Syro-Malabar Church became a fully fledged Uniat Church having a hierarchy of its own. Since 1956 it consists of the two archdioceses of Ernakulam and Changanacherry. With Ernakulam are the dioceses of Kothamangalam, Tellicherry and Trichur; with Changanacherry are Palai and Kottayam. Some of these have jurisdiction over their people resident in neighbouring Latin dioceses. Kottayam has jurisdiction over Southists throughout the Syro-Malabar Church.

The Church has flourished in the twentieth century. It now numbers over a million members. The Carmelite Tertiaries, who now have over 200 priests besides lay brothers, novices etc., carry on a great variety of educational and other work, including three university colleges, schools, boarding homes, industrial and commercial schools, and four printing presses, besides training institutions for their own members. They also carry on missions to the depressed classes and edit three different papers. Two other religious congregations for men have been founded since 1923, and there are six others for women, some dating back to the last century, others of recent origin; in 1954 the nuns numbered 4,300.

A notable event of the year 1930 was the conversion to the Roman obedience of one of the foremost Jacobite bishops of the Catholicos's party. Fr. P. T. Givarghese, who during the 1914-1918 war was a member of the staff of Serampore College, after his return to Malabar in 1919 founded a religious Order among some of his old students, called The Order of the Imitation of Christ, and another of the same name for women. Ashrams of the Brothers and Sisters of Bethany, as they were commonly called from their first house, the Bethany Ashram, were established in several places, and became centres of spiritual life at a time when the Jacobite community was distracted by party strife. In 1925 the Catholicos made him a bishop, and he became known as Mar Ivanios of Bethany. About that time the possibility of reunion with Rome was in the minds of the bishops of the Catholicos's party, and they chose Mar Ivanios to open correspondence on the subject. So far as the majority of them were concerned, the idea came to nothing; but Mar Ivanios and his

assistant bishop Mar Theophilos went over to the Roman Church in 1930, and they were followed in that year and the next by most of the members of the Bethany ashrams and by others, nearly 5000 in all. From then onwards a considerable 'reunion movement' started. It was joined by two other Jacobite bishops, Mar Severios of the Catholicos's party in 1937 and Mar Dioscoros of the Patriarch's party in 1939. This community was not merged in the Syro-Malabar Church, but was organized separately with Mar Ivanios as Metropolitan of Trivandrum at its head, becoming in effect a second Uniat Church among the Syrian Christians. It was allowed to retain its Antiochene liturgy (the Liturgy of St James), of course with necessary amendments in certain particulars. To distinguish it from the older Syro-Malabar community it was given the name Syro-Malankara. In 1956 it was reported to have over 90,000 members with more than 70 priests. Archbishop Pothacamury however gives the number of members as 'about 60,000'.[1] Mar Ivanios died in 1953.

[1] *The Church in Independent India*, p. 36.

Chapter XIV

CO-OPERATION AND CHURCH UNION

As we have seen in the previous chapters, the Christianity which was brought to India by what is called the modern missionary movement came in the form of a number of foreign missions from Europe and America. Even in the case of the Roman Catholics this was so. Among them, whatever disputes and disagreements might arise between the various Societies and Orders or between the new missions and the old Portuguese church organization, all parties belonged to one and the same Church, and it was possible therefore to work out one ecclesiastical system for the whole country. But among the non-Romans the missions were so many independent organizations, holding in many cases conflicting views in theology and church polity, and each bound more or less rigidly to a denominational body in the West. Each propagated its own type of teaching and its own system of organization and discipline, with the inevitable result, as the work grew, that a great number of separate Christian communities came into existence, some Anglican, some Methodist some Presbyterian and so on. Not only so, but even among Christians of one denominational type there were separate communities belonging to missions from different countries. There were, for example, English Congregationalist missions and American Congregationalist missions, English, American and Canadian Baptists, and among the Lutherans a large number of missions from different countries and different synods or missionary societies in the same country, all Lutheran but each independent of the others. The disruption of the Church of Scotland into two parts in 1843 brought about two separate missions in India corresponding.

Though the nineteenth century missionaries, brought up in the West, tended to regard such a state of affairs as part of the constitution of things, and to take it for granted, they could not ignore the fact that in India Christians of all kinds put together were only a tiny minority in a vast non-Christian population. Consequently, although they staunchly maintained their denominational positions, they formed the habit of consulting together on common problems, and it is probably true to say that even

in the nineteenth century there was more brotherly feeling and co-operation between the denominations in India than there was at that time in the West. From 1855, when representatives of six Missions and three European churches in Bengal met in Calcutta, conferences of missionaries working in particular provinces were held, and later a series of decennial conferences for the whole of India was begun at Allahabad in 1872.[1] In these missionaries from all over the country came together to read papers describing the work done in their several fields, to consider points of policy and inter-mission relations, and to smooth out difficulties. It was at one of these decennial conferences, held at Madras in 1902, that the principle known as 'comity' was agreed upon, by which each Mission was recognized as occupying certain territories and it was agreed that other Missions should abstain from entering and working in those territories. The principle had been recognized earlier in some quarters, but not in others. Previous decennial conferences had discussed the matter, but had been unable to secure general agreement. Even at Madras there was not total agreement; but the conference was able to set up a Court of Arbitration to deal with cases where one Mission trespassed on the ground of another.[2] The principle of comity never applied to the larger towns, nor could it be fully carried out in some other places where more than one Mission was already at work; the Roman Church has never been a party to it, and some of the more extreme sects refuse it; but with these limitations it has been accepted and still continues in force, though nowadays the movement of population and the growth of towns tend to add to the number of places where it cannot be consistently observed. So it has come about that a man's adherence to a particular denomination is often a mere matter of geography. Christians who live in one district will be Methodists, because that is Methodist territory, whereas those living in another district will be Lutherans, because Lutheranism is the form of Christianity prevalent there.

A further step in the process of consultation was taken when the World Missionary Conference was held at Edinburgh in 1910. Here Protestant missionaries from all over the world and a few nationals from India and other eastern countries met together. As it was desired to continue the connexions thus begun, a committee was appointed to make plans for future co-

[1] Latourette, VI, p. 129.

[2] Richter, p. 229.

operation, and out of this came the organization known as the International Missionary Council, a permanent advisory and consultative body for Protestant Missions. After a delay caused by the First World War (1914-1918) this body was constituted in 1921.[1] After the Edinburgh conference of 1910, and by its wish, the American Dr John R. Mott, who was one of the chief promoters of these activities, visited various countries with a view to setting up national missionary councils for the Missions working in them. In India he held meetings with Christian leaders in the several provinces, and finally at a general conference at Calcutta in 1912 it was decided to form a permanent council, to be called the National Missionary Council of India. This came into being in 1914; but after the war, in 1923, its name was changed to National Christian Council, to signify that the Indian Church had an equal part in it with the foreign Missions. It was laid down that at least half the membership should consist of Indians. Since then regional councils have been formed in State or language areas (the Bombay, Andhra, Hyderabad and other Christian Councils) affiliated to the National Christian Council and designed to be a means of mutual consultation and co-operation to the Christian bodies working in those areas. Since 1956 full membership of the National Christian Council is restricted to Indian Churches (as distinct from foreign Missions) and the regional councils.

The objects of the National Christian Council are, 'to stimulate thinking and investigation on missionary questions; to enlist in the solution of these questions the best knowledge and experience to be found in India and other countries, and to make the results available to all Churches and Missions in India; to help to co-ordinate the activities of the Provincial Councils; and through common consultation to help to form Christian public opinion and bring it to bear on the moral and social problems of the day'. Besides holding a general meeting once in three years it carries on its work through committees, each charged with a particular subject, such as Christian literature, economic and social affairs etc., and maintains a headquarters at Nagpur with a permanent staff of secretaries, who tour the country to give advice and help and to promote in the different regions by holding conferences and in other ways the projects in which the Council is interested.

[1] On the I.M.C. see Rouse and Neill's *History of the Ecumenical Movement*, pp. 366 ff.

Each secretary has particular responsibility for certain specific branches of work and their appropriate committees. A monthly review, *The National Christian Council Review*, is also published.

In pursuance of the aim of enabling Churches and Missions to consult together on matters of common interest, so that the wisdom of all may be available to each, the Council from time to time sponsors special commissions of inquiry into particular branches of Christian work, whose published reports are influential in forming opinion and policy. As examples we may quote the Lindsay Commission on Christian colleges, whose report *Christian Higher Education in India* was published in 1931, the survey of mass movements, the results of which appeared in Dr J. W. Pickett's report *Christian Mass Movements in India* (1933), and the survey of theological education, out of which came Dr C. W. Ranson's report *The Christian Minister in India* (1945). One of the most important functions of the National Christian Council is to represent the non-Roman Christian community as a whole in dealings with the Government of India, in such matters, for example, as the revision of the Indian Christian Marriage Act or negotiations concerning the entry of foreign missionaries. When the Indian Constitution was being drawn up, the N.C.C. through its secretaries was influential in securing the inclusion of a clause guaranteeing freedom 'to profess, practise and propagate' religion. The Council also administers central funds subscribed in the West for such purposes as famine relief and the production of Christian literature.

Though our subject in this book is the history of Christianity in India, we must not fail to notice two other results of the conference at Edinburgh in 1910, which have been much more widely influential. We refer to the movements set afoot to bring the non-Roman Churches together to discuss in a frank and friendly manner their theological agreements and differences, and also ways and means of bringing about international friendship and common action in political and social concerns, the two movements which became known by the names 'Faith and Order' and 'Life and Work'. A series of international conferences on both themes brought these matters prominently before the Christian world, and the Ecumenical Movement (the general name for all this activity) became, in Archbishop William Temple's much quoted phrase, 'the great new fact of our time'. The permanent organizations set up by both sides of the movement coalesced in 1948 in the World Council of Churches.

The detailed history of these movements need not concern us here.[1] Their effect however on the climate of opinion among Christian leaders in India as elsewhere was great.

Another kind of co-operation, begun even in the nineteenth century but much more common in the twentieth, is seen in what are called 'union institutions', that is colleges or other institutions carried on by two or more Missions in partnership. An early example was the Madras Christian College, which was reorganized in 1887 as a joint enterprise by the entry of the C.M.S. and the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society into partnership with the Free Church of Scotland Mission, which had carried it on until then.[2] Often it has been lack of funds and other resources which has brought home to Missions the advantage of combining in this way. Where it would have been difficult or even impossible for each Mission to staff, equip and maintain an institution of its own, several together have been able to maintain one jointly. The more elaborate and expensive institutions, such as colleges, requiring as they do a number of highly trained teachers and ample provision of buildings and equipment, afford the most obvious illustration of this. Such grandiose undertakings as the All India Mission Tuberculosis Sanatorium, Arogyavaram, and the Christian Medical College, Vellore, would never have been possible except by co-operation among a great number of Missions. Another field of co-operation, especially familiar to many of the readers of this book, is theological education. Thirteen of the twenty-one colleges and seminaries connected with Serampore College in 1960 were union institutions.

What we have been discussing in this chapter so far is co-operation between Mission or Church organizations which have agreed to come together and work together for certain common purposes, but otherwise remain separate. But Indian Church History in the present century is notable for attempts to do more than this, that is to say to bring separate bodies together into organic union. To these we must now turn.

It was natural that the first practical steps towards union should be taken by people belonging to different Missions of the same type of churchmanship. Disregarding certain vague approaches made earlier and occasional expressions of dissatisfaction on the

[1] The standard work on this subject is *A History of the Ecumenical Movement*, edited by Ruth Rouse and S. C. Neill (1954).

[2] Other Societies have entered into the partnership since.

part of some educated Indian Christians at their being involved in a western denominational system through no choice of their own, we may say that the first definite achievement was a local union of Presbyterians in South India in 1901. This brought together the communities of the American Arcot Mission and the two Scottish Presbyterian Missions (Church of Scotland and Free Church of Scotland) in and around Madras, all of the 'Reformed' tradition. In 1904 this body joined with several Presbyterian Missions in North India (eight in all) to form a Presbyterian Church of India. This was a somewhat scattered organization, whose constituent elements lived in widely distant parts of the country, and for this reason the Madras-Arcot group in joining it stipulated that, if a union with their neighbours of other denominations in South India should become possible, they would prefer to take part in that. Another local union of people of one denominational family was the loose federation of the Congregationalists of the London Mission and the American Madura Mission in Tamilnad, formed in 1905. The first fruitful attempt at an inter-denominational union was the South India United Church,[1] formed in 1908. This was a union of all the Congregationalists and Presbyterians in South India and the Jaffna District of Ceylon; in 1919, after the war, the Basel Mission district of Malabar also joined. The church order was a mixture of Congregationalism and Presbyterianism. The Church was governed by eight regional church councils, and had also a General Assembly, which however lacked authority; its decisions had to be ratified by the church councils before they had force, unless the matter was one which had been definitely referred to the Assembly by the councils to be decided; there was much local autonomy and difference of practice between one area and another.

A parallel movement in North India led to the formation of the United Church of Northern India in 1924, again a union of Presbyterians and Congregationalists. Eleven Missions were represented in it, and its area stretched from Bengal and Assam to Gujerat and the Punjab. The constitution is Presbyterian. Each local congregation has its Session; there are twenty-five Church Councils, representing groups of congregations over

[1] This was the name originally taken by the Madras-Arcot group in 1901, from whom it passed to the S.I.U.C. of 1908. To avoid confusion I have used it of the latter body only. On all these unions see B. Sundkler: *Church of South India*, chapter II; on the earlier ones, up to 1905, also Richter, pp. 435 f.

particular areas, and seven Synods representing the Church Councils of a linguistic area, and a General Assembly. There is a detailed Confession of Faith, in which the principal Confessions of the Protestant Reformation are commended and the doctrinal beliefs of the U.C.N.I. are set forth in detail in twelve articles.[1]

Meanwhile the Lutherans had been organizing autonomous Lutheran Churches, one of which was the Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church, formed after the war of 1914-1918 of the communities of the Leipzig Mission and the Church of Sweden Mission. In 1926 the Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India was founded. This, as its name proclaims, is a federation of autonomous bodies and not an organic union. There are nine member-Churches.

The most ambitious and far-reaching project of church union in the first half of the twentieth century was the one which led to the formation of the Church of South India in 1947, for here it was not a question of the drawing together of denominations of the same type, but an attempt to heal one of the major divisions that arose in the Western Church during the troubles of the Reformation period in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and had been imported into India by western Missions. The parties to the union were the South India United Church (the combined body of Congregationalists and Presbyterians which has already been mentioned), the Anglican dioceses in South India (Madras, Tinnevelly, Travancore and Cochin, and Dornakal) and the South Indian districts of the Methodist (M.M.S.) communion (Madras, Mysore, Trichinopoly and Hyderabad). The Anglicans belonged to a Church which at the Reformation had retained from the mediaeval Western Church the episcopal ministry and, in a revised form, the traditional liturgy. The Congregationalists and Presbyterians were spiritually descended from Calvinists who rejected both, and had behind them a long history of strife with the Church of England. The Methodists were the heirs of that part of the Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century which had not been able to remain within the Anglican system. There were thus abundant possibilities of conflict in the English background of the parties, besides which the presence in the S.I.U.C. of a section connected with the Basel Mission brought into the situation a fresh infusion of the

[1] This is reprinted in the *Plan of Church Union in North India and Pakistan* (1957), pp. 38-42.

principles of Luther and Calvin undiluted by English or American influences. To seek a union of such different traditions was no ordinary enterprise. Perhaps it could not have succeeded anywhere except in India.

Though the idea had been in the air earlier, the first motion leading to actual negotiations came from a group of Indian clergy, Anglican and S.I.U.C., who met in conference at Tranquebar in 1919. Prominent among them were V. S. Azariah, Anglican Bishop of Dornakal, who had convened the meeting, and V. Santiago, a minister from the Madura Church Council of the S.I.U.C. With them were an English missionary, H. A. Popley, and an American evangelist, G. Sherwood Eddy, both Congregationalists. This group, after discussion and prayer, drew up on their own personal responsibility a statement, to be sent to the Episcopal Synod of the Anglican Church in India and the General Assembly of the S.I.U.C., inviting them to consider entering into union on the basis of certain general principles. The authors began by declaring their belief that union was the will of God and the teaching of Scripture, and their conviction that the Christian Church in India was gravely hindered in its evangelistic task by its divisions. They added a reminder that those divisions were not of Indian making and they themselves did not wish them to be perpetuated. Then they proceeded to assert that each of the three systems represented among them,—the episcopal, the presbyterian and the congregational—,contained scriptural and valuable elements which ought to be preserved in a united Church, and that the kind of Church they contemplated was one in which these elements should be harmonized and there should be explicit recognition of the historic episcopate and the spiritual equality of all members. They proposed as the basic terms of union the following four points:

(1) The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as containing all things necessary for salvation.

(2) The Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed.

(3) The two Sacraments ordained by Christ himself,—Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

(4) The historic Episcopate, locally adapted.

(These are the four points defined by the Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops in 1888 as the necessary minimum of agreement between Christian people considering reunion; whence

they are commonly called 'the Lambeth Quadrilateral'.) They went on to say that the acceptance of episcopacy need not be taken to involve any particular theory of its origin or any doctrinal interpretation of it, and to disclaim any intention to call in question the validity of one another's ordination; and they concluded by putting forward specific proposals for the consecration of the first bishops of the united Church, and for an optional commissioning by these bishops of those ministers who wished to receive it, in order that they might be able to celebrate Holy Communion in the churches of either of the uniting bodies.[1]

Both the Episcopal Synod and the General Assembly having agreed to appoint representatives to negotiate, a Joint Committee was set up and began its work in 1920. The Wesleyan Methodists joined it from 1925 onwards.

From the publication of the Tranquebar manifesto to the actual inauguration of the Church of South India, a period of twenty-eight years, a vigorous debate went on both in the Joint Committee and outside. The Scheme of Union published in 1929 was only a beginning. In the following years it went back and forth between the Joint Committee and the Synods and Councils of the negotiating parties many times, as objections were raised or alterations demanded; it was elaborated and amended, and went through seven editions before it was finally accepted. Nor was the debate confined to India. From the first it was realized that the issues raised by these proposals, aimed as they were at solving some of the most stubborn problems left behind by the Reformation, were of more than local importance and were bound to affect all parts of the Christian world where those problems were to be found. The negotiators in India therefore sought the advice of theologians and church leaders in the West in drawing up and in amending the scheme; and each of the negotiating bodies in India, whether constitutionally obliged or not, wished to keep in touch with the corresponding bodies in Europe and America, and, as far as possible, to obtain their approval. Thus a discussion every whit as vigorous as that in India went on in western countries also, where the words 'South India' became familiar to many, sometimes as a symbol of hope and progress, sometimes as a cause of suspicion and doubt, sometimes even as a term of abuse. Whether in India or else-

[1] For the full text see B. Sundkler: *Church of South India*, pp. 101-103. This book gives a detailed account of the origins of the C.S.I.

where, the great division of opinion was between those who thought that the proposals gave up too much of Catholic doctrine and practice for the sake of a superficial union, and those who feared that they would lead too far in a 'Catholic' direction. Since the issues had arisen in the West, it was perhaps inevitable that much of the debate should be carried on by Westerners. Among Indians who took part some tended to be impatient of all this argument arising out of western controversies and to wish to have union without it; on the other hand there were some who echoed the more extreme arguments heard in the denomination to which they belonged.

We have no need to trace the course of the negotiations, but we must notice the leading features of the scheme of union that was worked out. Fundamentally it followed the lines already sketched out in the Tranquebar manifesto; that is to say it was based on the four points of the Lambeth Quadrilateral, on which was erected a system in which the episcopate, the presbyterate and the congregation of the faithful all had their due place as necessary elements in the life of the Church. The first three of the four points received little elaboration, doctrinal definition being kept down to a minimum. Much freedom of worship was permitted; but a time was clearly envisaged when the united Church would want to draw up common forms of service, especially for Holy Communion. (In the event this time came very soon; one of the earliest and best fruits of union was the eucharistic liturgy of the Church of South India, first published in 1950.) It was the fourth point, the historic episcopate, and matters connected with it, that chiefly gave rise to debate, and it was out of this debate that some of the most distinctive characteristics of the scheme emerged.

Though it was accepted from the beginning (not without difficulty on the part of some) that the Church was to be an episcopal Church, widely different views about the episcopal ministry were current. Despairing of agreement here, the parties accepted and agreed to maintain the historic episcopate, but did not attempt to formulate a doctrine of it. Individuals were allowed to interpret it as they would; but the Church was not committed officially to anything more than the acceptance of it *de facto* and an admission that it had existed in the Christian Church from early times and was pastorally necessary in India. There remained the problem how to integrate the S.I.U.C. and Methodist ministers into the ministry of an episcopal Church,

so as to provide one unified ministry competent to serve in any congregation. Simple re-ordination was ruled out, as seeming to imply a repudiation of previous ministries. The original suggestion of a service of episcopal commissioning of those who wished it, to enable them to minister in congregations which required an episcopally ordained minister, was rejected as inadequate, invidious and possibly ambiguous. Another proposal of a mutual commissioning of all ministers was also rejected for similar reasons, and so also a proposal, made at a late stage of the negotiations, for a general 'supplemental ordination'. The only course left was the one which was actually taken, namely to begin with a mixed ministry and leave the ultimate decision to the united Church at some future time. It was provided therefore that all the ministers of each of the uniting parties should be accepted as ministers of the Church of South India with the right to minister anywhere within it; but a 'pledge' was given, that none of them would be imposed upon a congregation which could not conscientiously welcome his ministrations; and further it was laid down that after thirty years,—during which all new ordinations in the Church of South India would of course be episcopal—,the Church should decide whether it would continue to allow exceptions to the rule of episcopal ordination or not. These provisions,— the initial mixed ministry, the pledge and the thirty years' period before decision—, are the distinctive features of the South Indian method of handling this problem. Illogical as they are, they were accepted because no other proposal that was made could win agreement; but they have been severely criticized, and have been avoided in more recent plans of church union elsewhere. In defence of them it may be said that, if Christians of widely different traditions are to unite, all things cannot be settled beforehand; there are some matters on which the Church must be left to reach a common mind afterwards in the light of its growing experience of union. For an act of union is in a sense only a beginning; it initiates a process of growing together. Intractable problems are more likely to find their solution within a common life than in separation. In South India at any rate this question of the unification of ministries seemed to be a problem of this kind. The South Indian method is, as has been said, 'to unite in order to unite'.

Since 1929 other consultations with a view to church union have been going on in North India and in Ceylon. In North India two organizations, the Round Table Conference and the

Joint Council, working on different lines and representing partly the same and partly different Churches, made the preliminary explorations. Eventually it was on a 'Basis of Negotiation' prepared by the Round Table Conference, first made public in 1939 and revised and developed in following years, that a Plan of Church Union was drawn up. A Negotiating Committee was constituted in 1951 by the Church bodies concerned, which then were: the United Church of Northern India, the (Anglican) Church of India, Burma and Ceylon,[1] the Methodist Church in Southern Asia,[2] the (British and Australian) Methodist Church and the Council of the Baptist Churches in Northern India. At the time of writing the third edition of this Plan (1957) is before these Churches and two others which joined the Negotiating Committee in 1957, namely the Church of the Brethren and the Disciples of Christ, and they have been asked to decide definitely whether they will or will not enter into such a union.

As is acknowledged in the preface, the North Indian Plan of Union owes much to the South Indian scheme and has borrowed also from the scheme drawn up in Ceylon; but it has distinctive features of its own in arrangement, phrasing and substance, so that it is far from being a mere copy. In its general conception of the kind of Church that will result from the union, and in its administrative provisions, it is very like the South Indian scheme. As in South India, there is little attempt to go beyond the first two points of the Lambeth Quadrilateral in elaboration of doctrine; on the other hand theological statements made in other connexions tend to be more precise than those in the South Indian scheme (see for example part I, chapter IX, 1 and 2, on the ordained ministry). There is also the same acceptance of the historic episcopate, in a constitutional form, *de facto*, and refusal to bind the Church to any particular theological interpretation of it beyond the definition 'by historic is meant the episcopate which is in historic continuity with that of the early Church' [IX 5 (*c*)], which is a more positive statement than the corresponding South Indian one. The special features of the North Indian plan appear in its procedure for unifying the ministry and in its provisions concerning Baptism and church membership,

[1] On this title and the change it represents see below, pp. 254 f.

[2] The name assumed by the Methodist Episcopal Church in India in 1939.

a subject on which one of the parties to the union,—the Baptists —,hold special views.

Concerning the ministry the South Indian method of gradual unification is given up, and the intention is to secure from the very outset a unified ministry competent to celebrate the Holy Communion in any congregation of the united Church. The method chosen is a rite of mutual laying-on of hands with prayer. It is not specifically called either 'commissioning' or 'supplemental ordination', and it is frankly recognized that 'there may be different interpretations of this rite, deriving from different Church traditions'. It is stated that there is no intention to deny the reality of ordinations previously received, and no presumption that 'grace, gifts, character or authority that have already been bestowed' will be bestowed again. Thus 'it is not re-ordination'. But

> the laying-on of hands is adopted as a scriptural and traditional symbol of the bestowing of spiritual gifts by God; and the uniting Churches intend by prayer and the laying-on of hands to seek from God for their ministers whatever of the fullness of Christ's grace, commission and authority each may need for the performance of his proper office in the Church of North India. (Part II, chapter VII, 14.)

A 'Representative Act of Unification' is to take place at the inauguration of union, and there are to be subsequent services in all dioceses, at which the diocesan bishop and the presbyters who have already taken part in the 'Representative Act of Unification' will jointly perform the rite for the other ministers. In North India it is not only the ministry of presbyters which has to be unified, but that of bishops also; for there are two episcopates among the uniting parties, that of the Anglicans, claiming to have been received by succession from the early Church, and that of the Methodist Church of Southern Asia, which began in America in the eighteenth century. At the inauguration therefore there is to be first an 'Act for the Bringing together of the Episcopates', at which each group of bishops will lay hands on the other group with a prayer similar in intention to the one mentioned above, and then the 'Representative Act of Unification of the Ministry'.[1]

[1] On the whole subject see *The Plan of Church Union in North India and Pakistan* (1957), Part II, chapter VII.

In the matter of Baptism the Plan provides for both the practice of infant Baptism and the practice of 'believers' Baptism' (that is Baptism administered only to those who are old enough to make their own profession of faith) to be followed in the united Church. Baptism is to be followed by Confirmation or admission to communicant membership, by a bishop or a presbyter. Persons baptized in infancy will make their profession of faith at the time of Confirmation. Where infant Baptism is not practised, there will be a service of infant dedication. A minister who has scruples about infant Baptism may invite some other minister of the Church to perform the rite. Certain 'guiding principles' concerning the two practices are laid down. It is asserted that, whichever practice is followed, there is only one Baptism, which therefore cannot be repeated in the life of any one person. Therefore, although ministers in their teaching of Baptism must teach according to their convictions, there should be no attempt to persuade people who have been brought up in either practice to forsake it for the other; and if nevertheless someone who has been baptized in infancy forms a desire to receive 'believers' Baptism', the utmost efforts should be made to convince him that he ought not to be rebaptized, but to seek the remedy by some other means which will effectively re-affirm his Baptism and symbolize for him his engrafting into Christ. If he still persists, the matter is to be referred to the bishop of the diocese for pastoral advice and direction.

The difficulty arising from the existence within one Church of the two different practices and the two different types of teaching corresponding is obvious, and it is fully recognized in the Plan. What is said about this deserves to be quoted in full:

> The Church of North India . . . is keenly aware of the fact that divergence of conviction on this matter is something which can only be borne within one fellowship by the exercise of much mutual forbearance and charity. Nevertheless it believes that it is called to make this act of faith in the conviction that it is not the will of the Lord of the Church that they who are one in their faith in Him should be divided even for such a cause as this. It further believes itself to be called to this venture in the confidence that in brotherly converse within one Church, those of diverse convictions will be led together in the unity of the Spirit to learn what is His will in this as in other matters of difference. (Appendix B, section 4).

This is another example of that hope, that a problem which Christians could not solve while separated from one another may ultimately find its solution within the common life of a united Church, which we have noticed in another connexion in South India. There the subject was the unification of the ministry; here it is the reconciliation of different views of Baptism. Thus North India too proposes to 'unite in order to unite'.[1]

Since some parts of the uniting Churches lie in Pakistan, the intention is to form two Churches, the Church of North India and the Church of Pakistan, having identical constitutions and in full communion with each other, but autonomous.

The Church in India throughout its history has usually been dependent on the Churches of the West, and has had little opportunity to play a conspicuous part in general Church History; but in this matter of church union in the twentieth century it has played a leading role and made a notable contribution to the Christian world.

[1] The sections of the Plan dealing with Baptism are Part I, chapter VI, section A, and Appendix B.

Chapter XV

THE EMERGING INDIAN CHURCH

The most prominent feature of Indian history in the first half of the twentieth century was the nationalist movement. This had already begun in the later years of the previous century, when the spread of English education and western civilization, which had proved so fascinating when first introduced and have continued to exercise a potent influence right down to our own day, also provoked a reaction. On the religious side the reaction took the form of a reassertion and defence of Hinduism in modified versions, such as those of the Arya Samaj and the Ramakrishna Mission. On the political side it appeared as an impatience of British rule and an aspiration towards *swaraj*, which in the twentieth century assumed revolutionary proportions. From the foundation of the Indian National Congress in 1885 it became an organized movement. After passing through a phase of extremist violence in the early years of the century, it found a constructive leader after the war of 1914-1918 in Mahatma Gandhi. Through his unique influence it broadened out into a national crusade, on the whole a peaceful one. The British Government had to recognize the claims of nationalism and in 1947 after the end of the Second World War the goal of independence was reached, and India and Pakistan began their separate existence as sovereign states. Mahatma Gandhi's personality, besides inspiring the campaigns of *satyagraha*, captured the imagination of thousands who were never active participants in the political movement. He did more than any other man to create a sense of national unity and self-respect.

Not many Christians took a direct and active part in the political struggle; a man such as Kali Charan Banerjea, a lawyer of Bengal who was both a keen Christian and a prominent member of the Congress in its early years, was exceptional. And, so far as the majority of the community were concerned, the rising national self-consciousness was rather slow to affect them. Living as most of them did in country places not easily receptive of new ideas, and not accustomed to regard public affairs as any concern of theirs, they and their catechists were content to live under the settled order of the British *raj* and the paternal rule of missionaries. If now and then feelings of resentment were aroused, they did not let them appear; for they knew that

their interests were bound up with the established order. In the later stages of the struggle for independence the Christian community both in town and country sympathized more and more with the aim of the Congress; but the attitude of hostility to Christian enterprises, which they not infrequently met in local Congressmen, made them chary of throwing in their lot openly with it.

Such might be the attitude of the inarticulate multitude; but the more sophisticated members of the community, whose education and social standing gave them a more independent outlook and enabled them to mix with non-Christians of similar status,—these could not but feel the stirrings of national pride. Indeed it sprang up instinctively in them without needing a political campaign to prompt it. Already in the age of Duff, Lal Behari Dey after being ordained to the Presbyterian ministry in Bengal was demanding equality of status with Europeans,[1] and at the other end of India in 1857 three young converts in Tinnevelly, Muthiah Pillai, Dhanukoti Raju and Manakavala Perumal Pillai, firmly refused to be parted from their *kudumis* (hair tufts) before Baptism, in spite of the demands of a notoriously strong-minded missionary.[2] We find too in the second half of the nineteenth century a greater inclination among converts to seek Indian ways of expressing their Christian devotion, as if some men at any rate were finding the prevailing westernism unsatisfying. Krishnarao Sangle of Ahmednagar composed Marathi lyrics in Indian metre and set to Indian *ragas;* a collection of them, called *Gayanamrit*, was published in 1867. About the same time he and Vishnupant Karmakar began to turn to Christian use the Indian oratorio-form known variously as *kirtan*, *harikatha*, *kalakshepam* etc., in which the story-teller, accompanied by a band of musicians, delivers his matter in a musical recitative interspersed with songs and choruses.[3] In the Tamil country Krishna Pillai of Tinnevelly enriched Indian Christian poetry by two celebrated works, *Rakshanya Yatrikam* (1894), a long poem inspired by *Pilgrim's Progress*, and *Rakshanya Manoharam* (1898), a book of devotion.[4] In the

[1] *Indian Christians: Biographical and Critical Sketches*, anon. (published by Natesan, Madras), pp. 33-35.

[2] Sir David Devadoss: *Life of Poet H. A. Krishna Pillay*, p. 29.

[3] E. G. K. Hewat: *Christ and Western India*, pp. 220-222. On the *kirtan* see E. E. White: *Appreciating India's Music*, chapter VII.

[4] Devadoss, *op. cit.*, pp. 76-82.

Telugu country Choudhury Purushottam (1803-1890), a Brahmin convert baptized at Cuttack in 1833, wrote lyrics which are highly esteemed. He also published a book of verse, *The Gospel Trumpet* (1872). Another Brahmin convert, Pulipaka Jagannadham (1826-1896), pastor in Vizagapatam, and Gollapalli Nathaniel (1839-1914), an evangelist in the Godavari delta, are also celebrated in that part of India for their lyrics.[1]

The most outstanding literary fruit of the new spirit is seen in Narayan Vaman Tilak (1862-1919), whose Marathi poetry was inspired not only by intense personal devotion to our Lord Jesus Christ but also by intense love of his country, as is suggested by the hymn which he wrote on the day of his Baptism, which begins 'Priyakara Hindisthana'.[2] Tilak was baptized in 1895, and most of his work was done after the turn of the century. He is acknowledged in Maharashtra by non-Christians and Christians alike as one who gave new life to Marathi poetry by breaking away from conventional metres and styles and conventional subjects, and introducing the love of nature, the common life of the people and the service of India. In his specifically Christian work he baptized into Christ the lyricism he had inherited from Tukaram and the old Hindu *bhaktas*. He is said to have written between three and four hundred lyrics of his own, besides translations of English hymns and canticles; many of them are included in the hymn books used by Marathi Christians. The two principal collections are *Bhajanasangraha* (1906) and *Abhanganjali*, published shortly after his death in 1919. Tilak was another who made use of the *kirtan*. He also began to write a long epic on the life of Christ, called *Christayana*, and intended to be for Christians what the *Ramayana* is to Hindus; but he did not live to finish more than the first book, on the Nativity, which was published in 1921.[3]

We also find attempts made in the early twentieth century by certain individuals to live as independent *sannyasis*. Tilak himself resigned from his position in the American Marathi Mission and spent the last twenty months of his life in this way,

[1] I am indebted to the Rev. C. Devasahayam, B.Sc., B.D., for these particulars about Telugu Christian poets. I have no doubt that other examples might be cited from other language areas which are not mentioned here.

[2] Hewat, *op. cit.*, p. 300.

[3] English versions of some of Tilak's lyrics may be seen in J. C. Winslow: *Narayan Vaman Tilak*.

believing that it would be a more natural and attractive way of bringing the Christian message to Hindus than the conventional methods. He planned to form what he called 'God's durbar', a loosely knit fellowship of any who would pledge themselves to follow Christ as their Guru, whether baptized or not.[1] Questionable as this aim was, his action was a striking attempt to use one of the traditional Indian modes of life for Christian purposes. Similarly B. C. Sircar, a Bengali who had worked in the Y.M.C.A. practised *yoga* in his later years and set up a Christian shrine at Puri, one of the sacred places of Hinduism.[2]

But the Christian *sadhu* who most of all caught the public imagination and became famous both in India and abroad was Sundar Singh. The son of a Sikh zemindar in the Punjab and deeply influenced by a religious mother, he was baptized in the Anglican church at Simla in 1905 after a vision of Christ remarkably like St Paul's on the road to Damascus. A month later, though he was only sixteen years of age, he donned the saffron robe and became a *sannyasi*, wandering about the Punjab, Kashmir and Himachala Pradesh. In this manner he spent the next six years, being associated for part of the time with an American, S. E. Stokes, who had also embraced a wandering life in imitation of St Francis of Assisi and the mediaeval friars; the two of them formed a 'Brotherhood of Service'. For a few months in 1909-1910 he was a theological student in St John's Divinity School, Lahore, whither the Bishop of Lahore sent him with a view to ordination; but he was ill at ease there, and, when he found that Anglican ordination would restrict his ministry to the Anglican Church, he decided to remain a *sadhu* and go among his countrymen as an independent preacher, not begging but living on their alms. Though he wandered in many directions, the region he made specially his own was the Himalayas, where he made his centre, in so far as he had any fixed abode, at Kotgarh in the Simla Hills on the road leading to Tibet.

An unusual feature of his life is his interest in Tibet, a country difficult of access and not given to welcoming foreigners; he went there several times, enduring much hardship in the snows of the high mountains and sometimes suffering persecution from the inhabitants. He also visited the plains of North India, where his extraordinary personality and mode of life as well as his preaching aroused interest among Christians and made him well

[1] Winslow, *op. cit.*, pp. 123-126. [2] Latourette, *op. cit.*, VI, p. 211.

known. His fame having spread, he was invited as a preacher to other parts of India and to other countries of Asia. In 1920 he visited England, where he made a great impression because of his striking appearance, his embodiment of an eastern and mystical type of Christianity and his parabolic manner of teaching. Visits to America and Australia followed, and, after a return to India, another tour on the continent of Europe in 1922. Back in India again he continued his preaching tours, but on a restricted scale, because his health began to fail. At this time he so far modified his *sadhu* ideal as to acquire a house of his own at Subathu in the Simla Hills, which became his home, where he spent the remaining years of his life when not on tour. Several little books which he wrote there became well known. In 1929 he set out on his last journey to Tibet, from which he never returned. What became of him is not known.

One result of the publicity he had received was that after his second European tour a controversy broke out as to his truthfulness. Some of the statements that he used to make, and stories that he used to tell of incidents in his life and experiences that had happened to him, appeared to some people so incredible that articles were written in periodicals in India and Europe accusing him of imposture. Those who knew him intimately, however, remained convinced of his integrity, though they admitted that his mystical temperament might have caused him sometimes to distinguish imperfectly between subjective experiences occurring in his own mind and events in the external world. There is no doubt that he made a great impression on those who came in contact with him.

As the first modern Christian *sadhu* and a man of exceptional character and gifts Sundar Singh stands alone. Whether in conscious imitation of him or not, lesser men have taken to a wandering life as independent preachers claiming to be *sadhus*, but with dubious results. He himself said of some such, 'Like frogs in the rainy season, several of them have sprung up. One or two seem to be doing good work, but the others are no good'.[1] Indeed such extreme individualism is not easily reconciled with the Christian *dharma*. *Sannyasis* who are members of an order

[1] A. J. Appasamy: *Sundar Singh*, p. 232. A number of books in several languages has been written on Sundar Singh. The most accessible are Mrs Arthur Parker's *Sadhu Sundar Singh, Called of God* (reprinted by C.L.S. in 1951) and Bishop Appasamy's book, which contains a bibliography.

in the Church and under its discipline, as the Jesuit missionaries in South India were in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, are one thing; would-be *sannyasis* who despise the Church and seek satisfaction in following their own inclinations are quite another.

The men of whom we have been speaking in this chapter hitherto were converts, men who brought into the Church with their new faith a strong consciousness of nationality and attachment to their Indian heritage. But among those brought up as Christians too we find signs of an enhanced national self-consciousness in the first decade of the twentieth century. It was probably this that prompted some young men of ability to prefer working in the Young Men's Christian Association or the Student Volunteer Movement to entering Mission service, for they felt that they would have more freedom there than under the missionary regime. V. S. Azariah, K. T. Paul and V. Santiago, who all became prominent in church affairs later, began their careers in this way. Another indication may be seen in the formation of several Indian missionary societies during this period, that is to say societies formed by Indian Christians to preach the Gospel and carry on Christian work in other parts of India than their own. The first of these was the Indian Missionary Society of Tinnevelly, founded in 1903. This Society chose as its field an unoccupied territory on the east side of the former Hyderabad State, whose name was soon to become familiar: Dornakal. The first Tinnevelly missionary, S. Pakianathan, went there in 1904, and the first baptisms took place in 1906. At the home base an efficient organization was built up, with a central committee (all Indian) at Palamcottah and auxiliaries in other places. The Society has succeeded in a remarkable way in enlisting and holding the interest and support of Tinnevelly Christians not only in their own district, but also in Madras, Poona, Colombo, Rangoon, Singapore and other places in India and abroad, to which they have gone. Its first secretary was V. S. Azariah, who had taken a leading part in its foundation. He was at that time one of the secretaries of the Y.M.C.A.; but after a few years his growing interest in the work of the Society in Dornakal led him to feel that he should himself go and take part in it. Accordingly in 1909 he resigned from the Y.M.C.A., was ordained, and went to live in Dornakal, where he continued to serve until his death in 1945. In 1912 he was consecrated as a missionary bishop (the first Indian bishop of the Anglican Church) assistant to the Bishop of Madras, and in 1922 Dornakal

was separated from Madras and made a diocese in its own right. By that time the Church there had increased greatly and other Missions were taking part in the work besides the I.M.S. of Tinnevelly. Nevertheless the Tinnevelly Society continued, and still continues, to support it to an impressive extent. In also has missions to some of the hill tribes of South India.[1]

In 1905 a more ambitious, but perhaps less practical, enterprise was started. This was the National Missionary Society (Bharat Christya Sevak Samaj), founded at Serampore at a meeting of young Indian Christians from different parts of India and different denominations with the help of the American G. Sherwood Eddy. Prominent among them were V. S. Azariah and K. T. Paul. This was to be an inter-denominational society, supported by Indian money, manned by Indians, though it would not refuse offers of help from other countries, and committed as far as possible to follow indigenous methods. Its objects were to evangelize unevangelized areas in India and adjacent countries and to stimulate missionary zeal in the churches. It did not intend to establish a separate denominational body of its own, but proposed to co-operate with the existing denominations. Its governing body is an All-India Council, which meets once in three years; the administration is carried on by the Executive Committee, which meets 'almost every month' at the Society's headquarters in Madras. There are also provincial committees responsible for certain particular fields. Fields of work for which the N.M.S. is solely responsible are few and restricted. The oldest are those of Okara and Bethlehem in the Western Punjab (now Pakistan), where work was begun in 1906. Another at Ferozabad in Uttar Pradesh, and sundry schools and dispensaries in South India complete the list; but the Society considers itself to be affiliated with church organizations and independent institutions, such as ashrams, in half a dozen other places. It also sends out 'gospel teams'. In 1950 it claimed to have 41 missionaries and 200 other workers (including volunteers), and a budget of Rs 130,435.[2] Though the idea of an undenominational Indian missionary society was taken up with some enthusiasm

[1] Paul Appasamy: *The Centenary History of the C.M.S. in Tinnevelly*, pp. 248 f., 278 f., 290; *A Brief Report of the Missionary Work of the C.S.I.* (1949), pp. 17-24; J. Z. Hodge; *Bishop Azariah of Dornakal.*

[2] The particulars in this paragraph are taken from a leaflet of the N.M.S. dated 13th October 1950 and the C.S.I. report just now mentioned, pp. 69-72.

at the time of its foundation and had behind it a genuine spirit of Indian Christian enterprise, later developments took a different direction. In particular there came a greater awareness of the Church, and a shift of emphasis from 'Mission' to 'Church', so that the evangelization of India was no longer seen as primarily the task of missionary societies, whether foreign or Indian, but as a function of the ordinary Church in its various regions and through its normal organs. The indianizing and strengthening of this, rather than the development of another organization on the fringe of it, became the predominant aim.

This change of outlook however came later, in the inter-war years and afterwards. Before 1914 the rising national consciousness of men such as those who supported the National Missionary Society tended to seek expression in conferences of Indian Christians, where the social and religious problems of the day were discussed, and ideas were put forward concerning the relation of Christianity to Indian life and thought and the form which a truly Indian type of Christianity ought to take. The conferences continued to be held for some years after 1914 also, though with gradually diminishing support. A keen, but unorthodox, group in Madras, led by V. Chakkarai and P. Chenchiah, who attempted to work out an Indian Christian theology by combining Hindu and Christian ideas, for a time attracted attention by their speeches and writings.[1]

An idea put forward in some of those conferences, which has borne some fruit, was that Christianity should make use of the ancient Indian institution of the *ashram*. An *ashram* meant originally a hermitage, or a group of ascetics living their religious life together in some quiet place, perhaps under the leadership of some sage. The idea of a life of retirement and meditation is familiar to the Indian mind and has a considerable popular appeal; on the other hand Catholic Christianity too has its tradition of the religious life lived in communities and orders, whether in monasteries or in the world. The *ashram* therefore seemed to be an institution which Christians could use to express their religious ideal in a way which India would readily appreciate. There were already in the country a few Religious Communities of the western type, such as those of the Society of St John the Evangelist (Cowley Fathers) at Poona (1870) and the Oxford Mission Brotherhood of the Epiphany at Calcutta (1881); the

[1] B. Sundkler: *Church of South India*, pp. 86-87.

ashram offered something more distinctively Indian and something capable of local adaptation in a great variety of ways. Since the First World War a number of *ashrams* have been founded up and down India. Their size and constitutions vary; but the common element is a simple community life of an Indian type, often shared by European and Indian members, with a regular provision for prayer and devotion, and often including service in some hospital or school in which the members work. Among the best known examples are the Christu Kula Ashram at Tirupattur in the North Arcot District of Madras State (1921) and the Christa Seva Sangha (1921) and Christa Prema Seva Sangha (1934) in and near Poona.[1] These and others are permament communities. The 'ashrams' at Sat Tal and Kodaikanal are in being only during certain months of the year. It may be noted that, although the ideal is Indian, the founder has often been a European. On the other hand the Syrian Christians (particularly the Mar Thoma) have a number of *ashrams*, which are of purely Indian foundation. Several of these are in their mission stations outside Kerala. Whether the *ashram* will become a permanent feature of Christian life in this country remains to be seen. It seems clear that the movement, if it is to be really strong, needs to have behind it a Church with a tradition of the religious life.

We may note also as a sign of the times the beginning of an attempt to use Indian styles of architecture in building churches. Up to about 1914 the churches built for communities connected with western Missions were unashamedly western in appearance. As late as 1923 the Indian author of *The Centenary History of the C.M.S. in Tinnevelly* referred with obvious pride to a well known church of the previous century in that district as 'one of the finest specimens of Gothic architecture to be found in South India',[2] without stopping to ask whether Gothic, a style peculiar to Western Europe and even there properly belonging to the Middle Ages, has any place in India. Even in this century some fine churches in western styles have been built, such as Medak cathedral in Andhra Pradesh. Such buildings as these are undoubtedly impressive; but more in keeping with the spirit of the time are those other buildings in which an Indian style has been used. Conspicuous examples are Dornakal cathedral (1915-

[1] See J. C. Winslow: *The Eyelids of the Dawn*, pp. 78-100.

[2] p. 111.

1938), a combination of Dravidian and Saracenic, and some college chapels such as that of the Women's Christian College, Madras, and that of the Union Kanarese Seminary, Tumkur, in the Mysore State (1932). These are buildings which show Christianity as naturalized in India and able to express itself through Indian art-forms. There are of course in country places many modest buildings making no claim to any special architectural beauty, which are at least built of local materials in a style in keeping with their surroundings, which also teach the same thing. Indeed in such matters country congregations have an advantage over town congregations. They neither need not desire pews; they instinctively leave their sandals outside the church before entering; and their music, though it may not always be melodious, is usually Indian. It is the towns that are the strongholds of westernism.

The indigenization of worship is a subject that has been much discussed, on the whole inconclusively. It is indeed a subject requiring great care. There must first of all be an understanding of the substance of Christian worship. The substance does not vary from country to country, and therefore nothing must be allowed to impair it. Moreover, since Christian worship is essentially corporate, and corporate worship is almost unknown to Hinduism, there is bound to be a large element in our worship which looks strange to a Hindu, as strange as Mohammedan worship still looks after all the centuries Islam has been in India. Probably the best kind of indigenization is that which comes about of its own accord and unnoticed over the years, as people instinctively do things in the way which is most natural to them.

But there are some matters in which it is possible to act deliberately, in order to remove what is unnecessarily foreign and bring in something more akin to Indian feeling. The most obvious of these is church music. Few things so stamp Christianity as a foreign religion as the strains of western hymns which the non-Christian passer-by hears ascending from a church or a funeral procession. Hymns in Indian metres and *ragas* already began to be written in the last century; for example the first edition of the collection now in use in the part of the country where this book is being written was published in 1896, and in some other areas doubtless there are collections going back earlier. More have been composed in the present century. Yet except in the country churches they have not yet replaced western hymns. This is no doubt due to familiarity and old associations, but it may also be

because the western hymns are more simple in language and (the best of them at any rate) more profound in matter. The Indian Church has had *bhakti*-poets of distinction, such as Tilak; but in how many language areas has it yet produced the lyric writer who can turn solid doctrine into lucid and memorable verse, and do for his Church what Charles Wesley did for English-speaking Christians? Nevertheless the advocates of Indian music have persevered. In 1915 H. A. Popley and K. T. Paul produced a musical form of service for the Tamil churches of the S.I.U.C.[1] In the Tinnevelly and Dornakal dioceses of the Church of South India other experiments of setting parts of the Anglican services to Indian music have been made.[2] Lyrical settings of the C.S.I. Liturgy with Carnatic music have been prepared in Tinnevelly, Jaffna and Andhra Pradesh. It is much to be hoped that such experiments will go on, until we have not merely hymns and metrical versions of Psalms and portions of services assigned to the people, but a complete Indian liturgical chant for the whole service, perhaps along the line of the *kirtan* or the intonation of poetry. Other experiments have been made with Christian *jatras* and harvest festivals, or occasionally to adapt a Hindu festival, such as Dipavali (Divali). Some new rituals have been devised, such as the service of the Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Church in the cemeteries early on Easter morning[3], and the Christian Home Festival. It may be added that there is great need in many places for a more adequate celebration of the major festivals of the Christian year, especially Easter.[4]

It is time now to turn to another aspect of the history of Indian Christianity in the twentieth century which came into great prominence especially after 1919. This was that shift of emphasis from 'Mission' to 'Church,' to which we alluded a few pages back. The rising national consciousness and the intensification of the political struggle for self-government formed the background to this and were partly its cause. The nineteenth century had been an age of foreign missions. Whatever the denomination might be, in practice the foreign missionary dominated the scene

[1] H. A. Popley: *K. T. Paul, Christian Leader*, p. 47.

[2] E. E. White: *Appreciating India's Music*, p. 69.

[3] J. W. Pickett: *Christian Mass Movements in India*, pp. 251 f.

[4] The ceremony with lights in the Christian Home Festival historically belongs to the Easter Vigil, which might well be restored.

with an almost patriarchal authority; and the Christians would call themselves by the name of some Mission (C.M.S. Christians, L.M.S. Christians and so on, rather than Anglicans, Congregationalists etc.). There was little consciousness of an Indian Church as such. Except in certain areas there had been little attempt to build up self-governing institutions. Here and there a distinguished individual had been brought into a position of leadership and authority; but such men ranked as 'assistant missionaries', that is to say they were regarded as organs of the foreign missionary society rather than of the Indian Church. This remained broadly the state of affairs up to the time when Bishop Azariah was consecrated (1912). In the years after the 1914-1918 war however missionary societies came more and more to realize that their business was not to strengthen and perpetuate their own organization, but to foster the Indian Church and prepare it to take full responsibility for its own life and work. Accordingly they began more seriously to devise representative institutions, to take Indian members into their administrative bodies and to hand over some of their responsibilities to bodies which were definitely organs of the Indian Church. The rate at which this was done, and the manner in which it was done, varied from Mission to Mission, and there might sometimes be dissatisfaction over the rate of progress; but in one way or another all the major Missions were giving their minds to this kind of policy in the years between 1919 and 1947.

With Baptist and Congregationalist missions the problem was to develop and extend their hereditary principle of local self-government, which had been there from the beginning, though practice had often fallen short of theory. Elsewhere representative institutions had to be created. As far back as 1867 the C.M.S. in Tinnevelly made a beginning, when a system of 'district church councils' was introduced at the instance of Henry Venn, who was general secretary of the Society at that time. These councils were local bodies representative of the churches of particular areas within the whole Tinnevelly District. They were responsible for collecting funds, supporting their catechists, repairing their buildings and providing for the poor. They consisted of the local clergy and representatives elected by the people, with a missionary as *ex officio* president. There was at first no attempt to make a central representative body, and in practice the ten local councils, though they gave the people

and clergy valuable training in the rudiments of self-support and local administration, did little to limit missionary autocracy, especially during the episcopate of Bishop Sargent (1877-1889). Later the system was reorganized. One central district church council was set up (1892), and instead of the former local councils fifteen 'circle committees' were formed, each with an Indian pastor as chairman. It is to be noted that, although the name 'church council' was used, these bodies were actually Mission organizations of the C.M.S. The Anglican work in Tinnevelly was long carried on as two separate, though related, Missions (C.M.S. and S.P.G.); when a local episcopate was first introduced (1877), each Mission had its own bishop, Sargent for the C.M.S. and Caldwell for the S.P.G., and its own organization. Even after the Tinnevelly diocese was erected and one diocesan bishop took office (1896), the separate Mission organizations continued, and although a new body called the Central Church Council was formed, 'apparently as the nucleus of a Diocesan Synod to support the new Bishop', this, according to the C.M.S. historian, 'remained an assembly of an academical character with no real power or effective influence over the affairs of the church'; and conversely the diocesan bishop (Morley) 'was not directly connected with the C.M.S. organizations' and therefore 'was not in a position to take a leading part in the inner life and work of the mission'.[1] This was not a state of affairs favourable to the further growth of the Church towards full responsibility and self-government.

Bishop Waller saw that it was necessary to build up a diocesan organization, uniting the two sections of the diocese and providing the Indian Church with organs of its own, through which it could express itself. A Diocesan Council was formed in 1917, consisting of the Bishop, all the clergy and lay representatives of all the parishes.[2] Though it had little executive power at first, its authority increased. By degrees all departments of the work were brought under the administration of the Bishop and Diocesan Council, and the separate Mission organizations came to an end. The process was helped by the constitutional change of 1928, when the Anglican body in this country, which until then had been legally a part of the State Church of England, became the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon, an autonomous province

[1] P. Appasamy: *op. cit.*, pp. 218, 231, 252.

[2] Bishop Waller in P. Appasamy: *op. cit.*, p. 301.

of the Anglican Communion with a constitution of its own, providing for synodical government. It was hastened still more when the diocese entered the Church of South India in 1947. Tinnevelly received its first Indian Bishop in 1953.

This very brief sketch of the development in one of the oldest communities illustrates a process that sooner or later began and went on all over India. Its details varied according to circumstances. Some bodies, such as the Basel Mission and the L.M.S., tended to make a clear distinction between mission and church, and to proceed by handing over certain limited responsibilities to the Church, while keeping the rest under the management of the Mission, though with Indian members included in the Mission committees. Others, particularly the Methodists, had an organization which did not distinguish formally between church and mission, so that with them it was not a question of creating new organs, but of indianizing the existing machinery; the system of circuits, district synods and provincial synods among the British Methodists, and of districts, annual conferences and central conference among the American Methodists could remain unchanged. The process of indianization was more rapid among the American Methodists than among the British. Some bodies, such as the Anglicans, had to deal with legal complications arising from their connexion with the State. Others, such as the American Presbyterians and the Church of Scotland had communities organized as Indian provinces of the Presbyterian Churches of America and Scotland. Others, such as most of the Lutheran Missions, were under the authority of Mission Boards or synods in Germany or America. In some the process began early, in others late; in some it advanced more rapidly, in others more slowly. But slowly or rapidly, and by whatever method, a process of transferring responsibility to the Indian Church and of making the work church-centric went on. The pace was greatly accelerated after the country became independent.

That this has been a move in the right direction no one doubts. That direction has been defined in a well known phrase, 'a self-supporting, self-governing, self-propagating Church',—which, it is interesting to remember, was first coined more than a hundred years ago by Rufus Anderson, a secretary of the American Board, who visited India in 1854-55.[1] The ideal defined so long ago

[1] Richter, pp. 428 f.

has still not been reached fully; but the twentieth century has seen considerable progress towards it, and, if we think in particular of the period since the First World War, the Indian Church is obviously much nearer to being 'self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating' now than it was at the beginning of the period. The foreign Mission, though still present, has receded into the background of the picture; the foreground is occupied by the Indian Church. There are more Indian clergy, teachers, doctors; more Indians in positions of leadership and responsibility; more taking part at all levels in the conduct of business; among the ordinary members of the Church there is a self-consciousness and vigour and a readiness for self-expression that were much less in evidence forty years ago. It must be confessed that self-expression has taken undesirable as well as admirable forms. Opportunities for self-government have all too often been misused. The electioneering methods of secular politics have been imported into church affairs. Pastorate committees and other administrative bodies have been treated as places where small-minded men might gratify their sense of self-importance or gain selfish or party ends. There must be few Churches that have had no experience of intrigues, factions and ill feeling which have found their material in the administrative machinery. That which was devised for the Church's welfare has often been made the means of wrecking its peace. This is a feature of church life in the mid-twentieth century which the historian cannot omit to notice and to deplore, though it may be hoped that the Church will grow out of it as it attains greater maturity.

It must also be confessed that in the matter of self-support there is still a long way to go, in spite of much progress made. The Indian Church is still greatly dependent on financial help from western missionary societies.[1] This is a grave weakness in itself and particularly dangerous at the present time, when the rulers of the country are resentful of foreign influence. It does not appear either that the Indian Church is yet able to do without the personal service of missionaries entirely. While these things are so, it is difficult to assess its real strength, because we do not yet see the building without the scaffolding. Still the number of missionaries (in the older Missions at any rate) is

[1] There are honourable exceptions. For example in the Lushai Hills of Assam the Baptist churches have been self-supporting from the beginning.

dwindling. Moreover it is clear that constitutionally authority lies with the Church, and the missionaries have their position within it as organs of the Church and are subject to its discipline. Nowadays the older missionary societies do not send missionaries to India except at the request of the Church.

In the process of making the work church-centred instead of mission-centred, whose history we have been tracing, a good deal of attention had to be given to constitutional and administrative matters. This was probably inevitable, though perhaps councils and committees and the attitude of mind that they generate have tended to become too prominent. But the process would have failed if it stopped at councils and committees. Events in China, where a Communist regime deprived the Church of its central institutions and administrative machinery and made it sever its connexions with the West, have provided a sharp reminder that ultimately the strength or weakness of the Church is the strength or weakness of each local congregation. What ultimately matters is that they should be communities of faithful men and women living by the Word and the Sacraments as genuine local manifestations of the Body of Christ. Centralized systems of administration have their advantages, but they are not an end in themselves; the end is the building up of the People of God in every local church. Consequently fresh emphasis is beginning to be laid nowadays on the local community of the faithful, and correspondingly on the teaching, sacramental and pastoral functions of the ministry. What pattern of church life the Indian Church will eventually evolve for itself, and whether it will evolve it freely by its own choice or be forced to it by external events, are questions for the future. But let there be no doubt about the aim. The aim now and always is, Let the Church be the Church.

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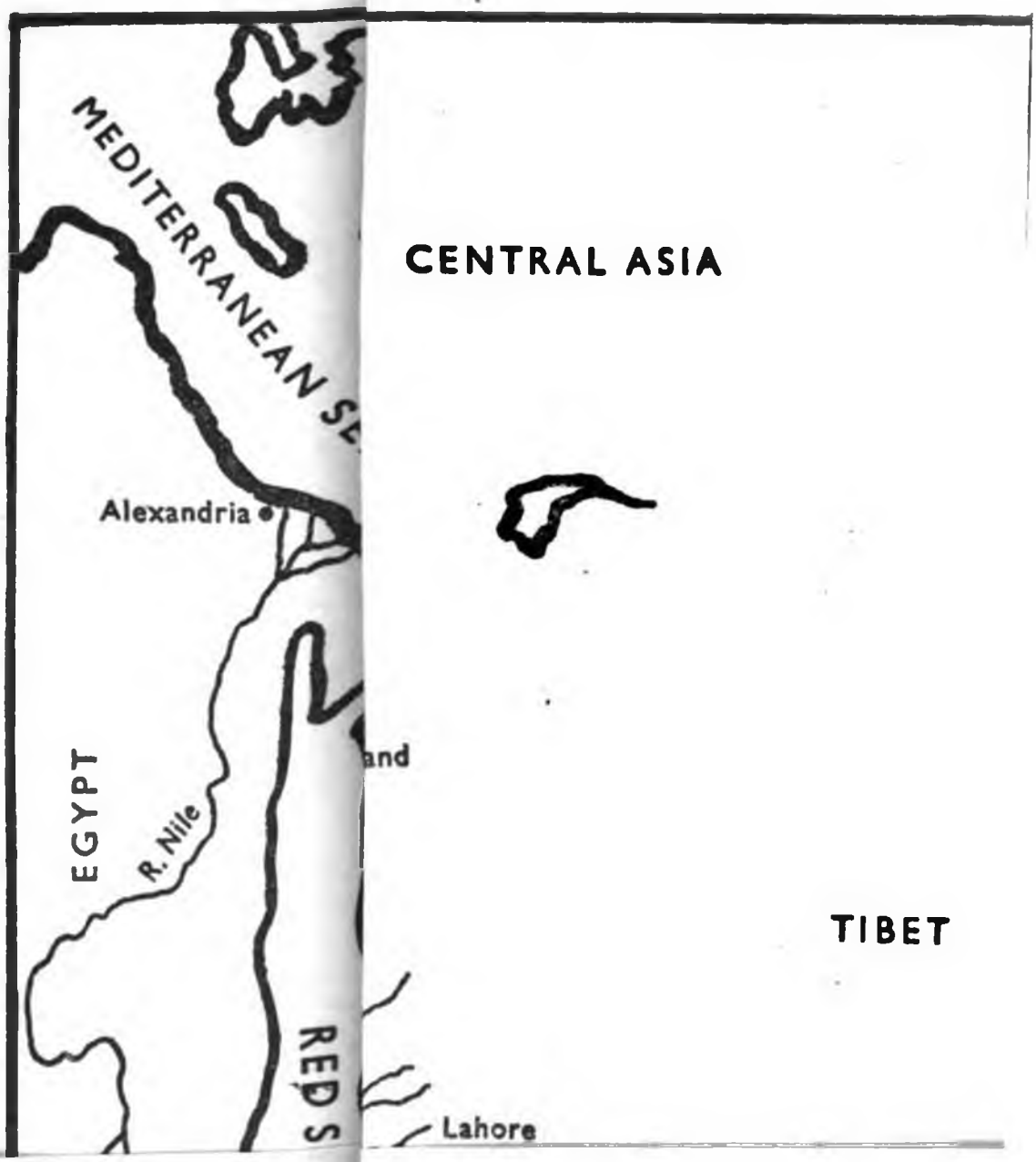
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